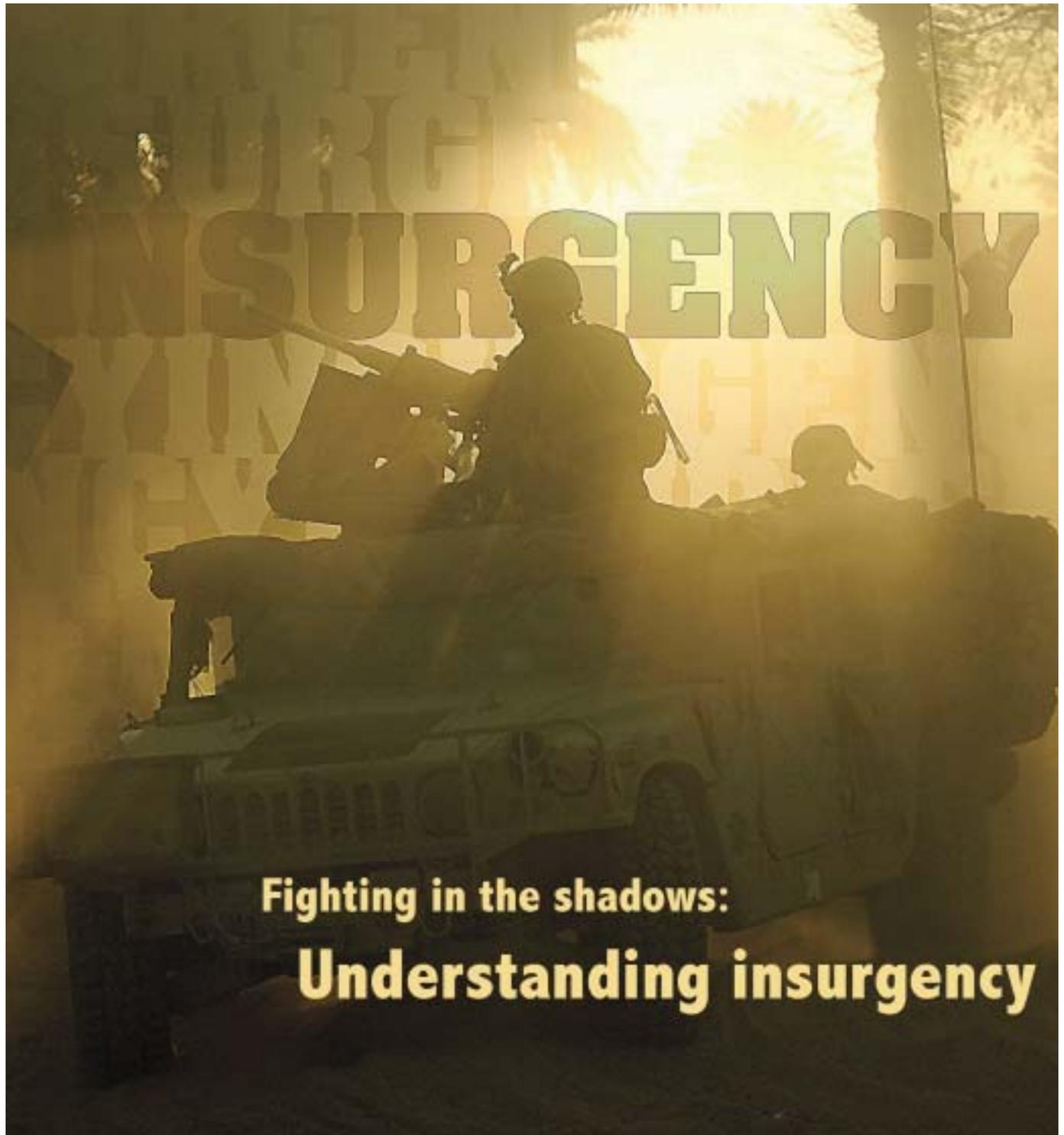
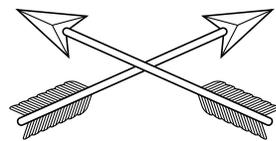


Special Warfare

The Professional Bulletin of the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School



From the Commandant



Special Warfare

With the rise of insurgent activities around the world in countries like Iraq, the United States has a renewed interest in the requirements of conducting counterinsurgency. Insurgency is not a new phenomenon: Examples of insurgencies can be found throughout history and in various parts of the world. Even today, there are insurgencies occurring in Africa, Latin America, Indonesia, Iraq and the Philippines.

While each insurgency is different and must be countered in different ways, they all share common characteristics. The foremost of those is the importance of popular support — whether it's in actual physical support or by lack of interference from the population — to the success of the insurgents. The insurgents do not have to convince the populace that they are right, rather they have to convince them that the government cannot, or will not, meet their basic needs. Thus, counterinsurgency becomes less of a military operation and more of a political one. Failure to understand this key difference leads to military leaders making sound military decisions, but ultimately poor political ones, which only helps the insurgents.

This is where the training of special operations Soldiers becomes important, and makes them a key component of any counterinsurgency operation. The quiet professionals that make up the special-operations brotherhood are not only skilled in military operations — they are Soldier statesmen. Their unique training equips them with the skills needed to fight in the shadows and to bring light to the murky area of insurgency. We see that today in Iraq, and it was proven in El Salvador.

Salvadoran officials and insurgents alike credited the presence of Special Forces advisers with the Salvadoran army as the most damaging factor to the insurgency in El Salvador. SF Soldiers are language-trained, regional experts skilled at working by, with and through indigenous forces to accomplish their mission. Civil Affairs Soldiers can assist



governments besieged by insurgent activity in building or rebuilding its infrastructure and in providing essential services to its people. Psychological Operations Soldiers can quell rumors and propaganda by disseminating true information that helps restore the people's faith in their government. When SF, CA and PSYOP are coupled with the other components of SOF, the combination is a truly powerful and unique capability.

If current operations are an indication, the demand for counterinsurgency operations will only grow, as will the need for Soldiers with both the military and political skills to operate in this joint, interagency and multinational environment. At SWCS, we must provide doctrine that includes lessons not only from history but also from current operations, and we must train our Soldiers to understand, assess and counter the insurgent movements they will face as special-operations Soldiers.

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim R".

Major General James W. Parker

Commander & Commandant

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Cover: Special Forces Soldiers patrol an area of Baghdad in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. (ARNEWS photo by Jeremy T. Luck)

Understanding Counterinsurgency

by Major Mark Grdovic

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, the Soviet Union, Cuba and China sought to offset the military power of the United States by supporting insurrections (or wars of liberation, to use their words) anywhere they could. To counter this strategy, the U.S. engaged in a global counterinsurgency. While the conflict in Vietnam is familiar to most, the U.S. efforts to support allied efforts to counter insurgencies in Africa, the Middle East and South America are less well-known. The current efforts of al-Qaeda to ignite radical anti-Western Islamic fundamentalism around the world greatly resemble the communist subversive efforts of the Cold War.

In counterinsurgency, understanding the problem is the first step toward developing a solution. As much as insurgency might seem to be an irrational campaign of violence waged by fanatics, there are factors that govern this type of warfare. Without a proper appreciation for those governing factors, it is highly unlikely that we can develop an effective counter-strategy for a given situation.

It is important to understand that insurgency is a strategy. It is the use of armed conflict and subversion to affect change. The goals of the strategy are achieved through the application of numerous tactics, such as guerrilla warfare, the use of terror, propaganda, etc. Once a military planner understands this fundamental, it

becomes clear that counterinsurgency requires a comprehensive strategy that includes much more than solely military goals.

In 1962, the *Marine Corps Gazette* published an issue entitled, "The Guerrilla and How to Fight Him." In the introduction, Lieutenant Colonel T.N. Greene put into context the importance of studying and understanding the strategy of communist insurgents in order to apply the appropriate tactics on the battlefield. He also made it quite clear that Soldiers engaged in fighting guerrillas need additional skills to supplement their existing combat skills.

*To beat the guerrilla on his own ground, the first essential is knowledge. Knowledge about the enemy himself, his methods, strengths weaknesses, tactics and techniques. More than that, to beat the guerrilla, means not to fight in the sharp black and white of formal combat, but in the gray fuzzy obscurity where politics affects tactics and economics influence strategy. The soldier must fuse with the statesman, the private turn politician. To win, the soldier must think and understand, and his odds will improve to the extent that he has done his homework before he arrives on the battlefield.*¹

Imagine an individual who is expecting to play a game of checkers but instead finds himself involved in a chess match. Without an understanding of the rules that govern that playing board, the individual might inaccurately conclude, "This game does not

follow any rules; it seems completely random and chaotic.” That frustration might be further amplified if the apparent similarities of the playing board lure the player into believing that the rules of his original game must be applicable, and that there is therefore no requirement for him to learn new rules. Any poor performance would be regarded as due to some anomaly. This is what Dr. Bruce Hoffman, during his recent analysis of the war in Iraq, referred to as the “pathologic resistance on the part of the military to (accept) ‘lessons learned’ on counterinsurgency.”²

The classic conflict or war that most military personnel think of is one in which two adversaries directly challenge each other. This is not the case with counterinsurgency. It is a contest, but not in the sense of a boxing match, in which two opponents battle to defeat each other. Counterinsurgency is like a courtroom battle to win the favor of a jury. In this analogy, the jury represents the population, and the lawyers represent the combatants. In counterinsurgency, the population will decide the outcome of the match-up.

History is filled with examples of military forces battling insurgencies only to be frustrated by successful tactical operations that seem to achieve little or no positive strategic result. It is easy to become overly focused on tactics and not on the overall strategy. Planners must learn that tactical success cannot overcome the lack of a comprehensive strategy. They must avoid the false notion that enemy attrition will at some point lead to success.

That notion plagued the U.S. government’s strategy during Vietnam and led to the French government’s defeat in Algeria. The French military believed that defeating the guerrillas operating within the urban areas in and around Algiers was the key to countering the insurgency. The military employed a brutal offensive to clear the capitol of the guerrillas and their support networks. The offensive was tactically successful, but it cost the French the support of the Muslim population and resulted in a strategic failure.

In 1966, Sir Robert Thompson, who was one of the creators of the successful British

counterinsurgency strategy in Malaysia from 1948 to 1960, wrote:

*It is the secret of the guerrilla force that, to be successful, they must hold the initiative, attack selected targets at a time of their own choosing and avoid battle when the odds are against them. If they maintain their offensive in this way, both their strength and their morale automatically increase until victory is won. As a corollary, it must be the aim of counter-guerrilla forces to compel guerrilla forces to go on the defensive so they lose the initiative, become dispersed and expend their energy on mere existence.*³

Initiative is the advantage that both sides desire, and the secret to maintaining or gaining the initiative resides with the popu-

Counterinsurgency is like a courtroom battle to win the favor of a jury. ... The jury represents the population, and the lawyers represent the combatants. In counterinsurgency, the population will decide the outcome of the match-up.

lation. If the insurgent is able to maintain the initiative, he is able to control the environment and to ensure that activities occur only when it is in his favor. That is the essence of the insurgent’s use of guerrilla warfare to mitigate his weaknesses and negate the host nation’s military superiority. Mao Zedong explained this clearly by the statement, “Although they are 10 to our one strategically, we are 10 to their one tactically.” Before the insurgent can achieve the initiative, he must have at least the compliance of the local population.

It is a misconception that an insurgent needs the population’s support to be effective. The population can desire to support the government and the local security force but refrain out of fear and the need to protect their families. This is how the insurgent employs terror as a tactic to shape the environment and enable future operations. Indoctrination and propaganda can eventually transform a compliant population into a supportive population, leading to

more effective and larger-scale guerrilla-warfare tactics. The insurgency does not need to transform into a conventional military force to win — only to create an environment in which the conventional military and the government can be directly challenged. That challenge implies as much of a degradation of the military's effectiveness and the government's legitimacy as of a strengthening of the guerrilla forces.

Consider the following example: Minor guerrilla attacks on convoys force the military to travel in larger groups and perhaps even consolidate forces to larger and more defensible bases outside the cities. While this improves the force-protection for the military, it reduces the overall security for the population centers, allowing the insurgents to coerce the local inhabitants through reprisals against civilians who support the government. It is not hard to

imagine how armed men could easily intimidate the inhabitants of an unprotected population center to provide information on security forces' activities or to refrain from any activities that might support the security forces.

While the insurgent is clearly to blame for its attacks on the inhabitants, the population sees the government as failing to perform its duty to protect them and therefore responsible. This perception is fueled by insurgent-generated propaganda, which plants the seed among the members of the population that the government doesn't care about them for a variety of reasons. If the insurgency replaced key members of the civil community with its own trained cadre, how long would it take to enamor an impressionable younger generation (possibly in opposition to their parents' beliefs) with organized indoctrination dispensed through schools, religious centers and youth programs, that portrays the guerrillas as freedom fighters and the government as puppets of the U.S.?

The example compares the traditional view of military vs. guerrilla (the boxing match), to the counterinsurgent view (the courtroom trial). From the traditional viewpoint, the military's force-protection decision is a good one, but from the counterinsurgent-strategy point of view, it is a bad decision.

The power of subversion and propaganda cannot be overstated. In undeveloped countries in which 75 percent of information is exchanged by word of mouth in cafes or market places rather than on television or on the Internet, countering propaganda is challenging. Unless the security forces are in touch with the local community, propaganda is likely to go unchallenged.

Ironically, successful tactical operations by U.S. Soldiers can have great propaganda value for the insurgents. The insurgents can cite the operations as evidence that the government is unable to protect its citizens, that the government is a puppet of the U.S., or that the insurgent movement is so strong that it can be fought only by the U.S.

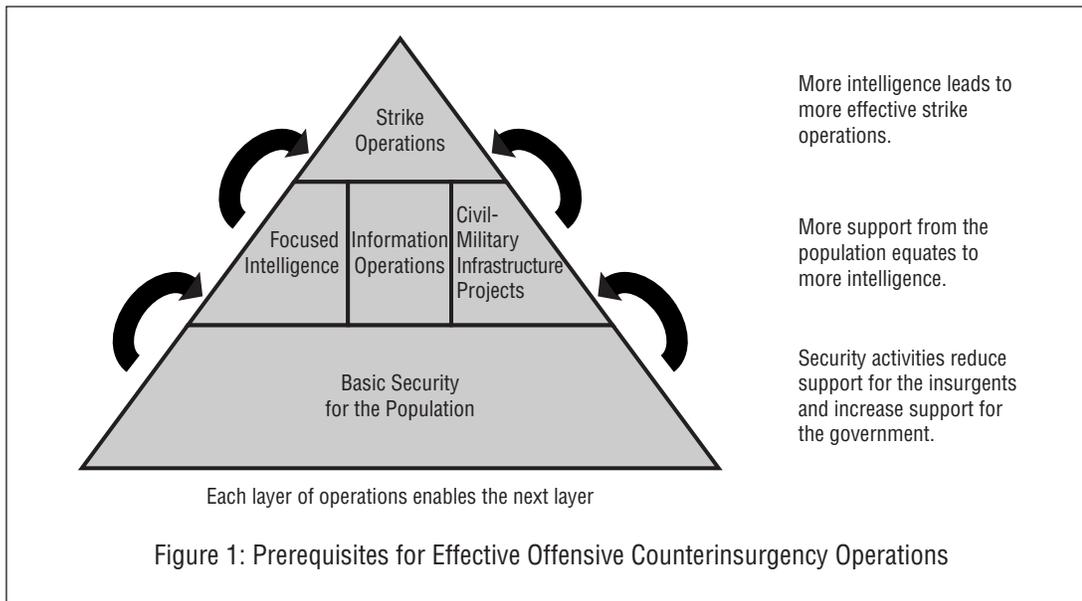
Conversely, marginally effective tactical operations by host-nation troops can show

Thompson's Five Principles of Counterinsurgency

Based on his experience as the British Secretary for Defence in Malaya during the Malayan Emergency (1948-1960), Sir Robert Thompson outlined five guiding principles for developing a counterinsurgency strategy:

- The government must have a clear *political* goal.
- The government must function in accordance with the law (not only the Law of Land Warfare, but the constitutional laws of the host-nation government, in order to maintain legitimacy with the population).
- The government must have an overall plan with objectives (short-term and long-term).
- The government must give priority to defeating the political subversion and not merely to killing guerrillas.
- When the insurgency employs guerrilla warfare, a government must give priority to securing the population areas first, before launching offensive operations.

(Source: Sir Robert Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency: The Lessons of Malaya and Vietnam* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1966).



that the government is sovereign, is in control and is trying to protect the population. Host-nation operations can have other counter-propaganda effects: In Iraq, for example, operations by Iraqi forces against Islamist insurgents could defuse the religious aspects of the struggle and counter the perception that the insurgency is some sort of jihad against the West.

The important question here is not whether one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter. It is, What does the population believe? In counterinsurgency, perceptions can be more important than reality. If the host-nation security forces can prevent intimidation of the population, then half the battle is won. When a population is secure from intimidation and coercion, the insurgent is relegated to the status of an illegitimate criminal. He cannot risk exposure among the population, and he is greatly limited in his operational capability. Military forces can then conduct effective offensive operations to neutralize the guerrilla elements of an insurgency. Figure 1 is a template for effective offensive counterinsurgency operations.

While counterinsurgency is a significant challenge for any government, it is by no means an insurmountable one. Ideally, an understanding of the basic principles and the enemy's strategy, coupled with the development of a situational and regional

awareness, will allow leaders and Soldiers to better deal with the challenge. ✂

Major Mark Grdovic is chief of the Special Forces Doctrine Branch, SF Doctrine Division, in the JFK Special Warfare Center and School's Directorate of Training and Doctrine. His previous assignments include service with the 1st Battalion, 10th SF Group as S1, and as detachment commander of ODAs 016 and 032; small-group instructor for the officer portion of the Special Forces Qualification Course; company commander and S3, 3rd Battalion, 10th SF Group; and commander, A Company, 4th Battalion, 1st Special Warfare Training Group. Major Grdovic holds a bachelor's degree from New York University and a master's degree from King's College London.



Notes:

¹ Lieutenant Colonel T.N. Greene, "Introduction," *The Guerrilla — and How to Fight Him* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1962), v.

² Dr. Bruce Hoffman, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, June 2004), 6.

³ Sir Robert Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency: The Lessons of Malaya and Vietnam* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1966), 115.

Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq

by Dr. Bruce Hoffman

In the 1993 film “Groundhog Day,” Bill Murray plays an arrogant television weatherman fated to relive the same day — February 2 — and the same unedifying experiences over and over.¹ The eternal cycle of repetition in which Murray’s character is condemned seems an apt parable to America’s mostly ill-fated experiences in fighting insurgencies.

More often than not, the United States has been frustrated in its efforts to effectively prosecute this unique blend of political-military operations. But, whereas Murray eventually attains enlightenment, a similarly decisive epiphany has yet to occur with respect to America’s historical ambivalence toward counterinsurgency. Indeed, an almost unbroken string of frustration (and disappointment) can be traced backward over nearly half a century to the early 1960s, when the U.S. became heavily engaged in

Indochina’s wars. Vietnam and Iraq thus form two legs of a historically fraught triangle, with America’s experiences in El Salvador during the 1980s providing the connecting leg.

This article will not rehash familiar criticism of Vietnam, El Salvador or Iraq.² Rather, it will use the present as prologue in order to understand, in terms of counterinsurgency, where the U.S. has gone wrong in Iraq;³ what unique challenges the current conflict in Iraq presents to the U.S. and other coalition military forces deployed there; and what light we can shed on future counterinsurgency planning, operations and requirements.⁴

Political dimension

At the foundation of counterinsurgency is the prominence of the political dimension — in doctrine, planning, implementation and, most importantly, operational coordination. Yet the failure to take this aspect of U.S. military operations in Iraq sufficiently into account arguably breathed life into the insurgency that emerged and has continued to gather momentum since the summer of 2003. At the heart of this criticism is the appar-

ent neglect in the planning for post-invasion stability operations following the initial military assault on Iraq, the defeat of its military and the destruction of Saddam Hussein and his dictatorial Ba’athist regime.⁶ In a particularly perceptive analysis, Anthony Cordesman notes, “The fact remains ... that the U.S. government failed to draft a serious or effective plan for a ‘Phase 4’ of the war: The period of conflict termination and the creation of an effective national building office.”⁷ He goes on to quote a senior officer with intimate knowledge of the operation’s planning and execution, who told Cordesman, “I can’t judge the quality of the Phase 4 planning because I never really saw any.”⁸ Whether this was because no planning was undertaken, as Cordesman argues or, more likely, that planners either “were not given enough time to put together the best blueprint for ... the ongoing reconstruction of Iraq”⁹, or because the importance of this phase of operations was not fully appreciated and not initiated early enough,¹⁰ is immaterial. The point is that this aspect of operations was woefully neglected.

Thus a critical window of oppor-

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Army News Service

The establishment of trained security forces is a strong counterinsurgency tool. The insurgents' goal is to take away the feeling of security from the people, that is why the Iraqi police are frequent targets of the insurgents. In this photo a Soldier from the 47th Civil Affairs Battalion, based in Florida, conducts close-quarter drills with Iraqi police.

tunity was lost because of the failure to anticipate the widespread civil disorder and looting that followed the capture of Baghdad.¹¹ In something akin to a chain reaction, that failure was in turn exacerbated by the operational disconnects that have been cited between the departments of Defense and State in post-conflict planning conducted before the invasion and the inadequacy of the initial effort of the Organization for Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance.¹² Many argue that disconnects continue between the civilians in the Coalition Provisional Authority, or CPA, and U.S. military commanders.¹³

The initial missteps seriously undermined the U.S. effort in Iraq and arguably led to the uncertain situation in that country today. That they are now recognized and are being corrected has doubtless prevented Iraq from sliding further into violence and instability — but

the damage already was done.¹⁴ This is why Cordesman titled his analysis, released in November 2003, *Iraq: Too Uncertain to Call*. “The bad news,” he wrote, “is that the U.S. sowed many of the seeds of both the present low-intensity war and many of the current uncertainties in Iraq. The good news is that the U.S. has since made major efforts to restructure its military forces to fight the emerging threat, has set up a more effective effort to create a new government, and has funded and begun to implement a major aid program. One reason it is so difficult to judge whether the cup is half empty or half full, is that the U.S. has only begun to pour.”¹⁵

While it can be argued that U.S. military planners could not have been expected to anticipate the emergence of an insurgency any more than they could have foreseen the widespread disorders, looting and random violence that followed the fall of Baghdad, that is precise-

ly the gist of the problem.¹⁶ The fact that military planners apparently didn't consider the possibility that sustained and organized resistance could gather momentum and transform itself into an insurgency reflects a pathology that has long afflicted governments and militaries everywhere: the failure not only to recognize the incipient conditions for insurgency, but also to ignore its nascent manifestations and arrest its growth before it is able to gain initial traction and in turn momentum.

Indeed, this was among the central conclusions of a 1991 RAND study that examined Britain's various experiences in countering insurgencies during the 1950s. “Late recognition of an insurgency,” the report stated, “is costly, insofar as the insurgents have the opportunity to gain a foothold before facing any organized opposition.”¹⁷ A follow-on RAND effort, which analyzed seven case studies involving counterinsurgency and counterterrorist efforts (including a re-examination of the aforementioned three British campaigns of the 1950s), reached an identical conclusion.¹⁸

The failure to detect early on the signs of incipient insurgency, combined with initially hesitant and uncoordinated responses in terms of meshing political as well as military approaches, gave the insurgents or terrorists invaluable time to entrench themselves in the civilian population and to solidify their efforts while the security forces groped and stumbled about. By the time the authorities realized the seriousness of the emergent situation, it was already too late.¹⁹

This is not to say that progress and success remained entirely elusive for Britain, but that invaluable opportunities were squandered to bring the insurgency immediately to heel, and that time, money and,

most of all, lives were needlessly expended.²⁰

As Cordesman and other observers widely agree, considerable progress in the political or “hearts and minds” dimension of counterinsurgency has been made in Iraq in recent months. Such efforts have included improving access to vital services (electricity, water, etc.), reopening schools, establishing an Iraqi police force, restoring the country’s oil production and generally encouraging normal daily commerce. However, the general unevenness and inconsistency of these achievements, and the fact that for many Iraqis many of these improvements are either too little or too late or both, has created cynicism and animosity, to say the least.²¹ All or at least some of this might have been avoided by better planning and foresight.

The critical nexus between the political and military dimensions has been widely acknowledged, even by those practitioners of counterinsurgency whose means and methods once aroused the ire not only of human-rights activists in various nongovernmental oversight organizations but also of the U.S. government. For example, General Rene Emilio Ponce, the defense minister at the height of the insurgency in El Salvador during the 1980s, was often quoted as stating that 90 percent of countering insurgency “is political, social, economic and ideological and only 10 percent military.”²⁸

Given the massive extent of American support of the Salvadoran counterinsurgency effort,²⁹ it is not surprising that one of its main benefactors should wax eloquent about this critical political-military dynamic. Nonetheless, from almost the beginning, when U.S. counterinsurgency doctrine and implementation was being framed in the early 1960s, this ineluctable link

was clearly recognized.

President John F. Kennedy stressed precisely this same point at the outset of the significant escalation of U.S. assistance to the government of South Vietnam that commenced during his administration. According to Roger Hilsman, who was responsible for counterinsurgency policy at the State Department during the Kennedy administration, from the time that Kennedy took office in January 1961, the president was preoccupied not just with counterinsurgency but also with its critical polit-

New military tactics had to be developed ... But new political tactics also had to be devised, and, most importantly, the two — the military and political — had to be meshed together and blended.

ical element. “What are we doing about guerrilla warfare?” Hilsman quotes JFK asking him shortly after he took up residence in the White House. The president then answered his own question, stating that “new military tactics had to be developed ... But new political tactics also had to be devised, and, most importantly, the two — the military and political — had to be meshed together and blended.”³⁰

Kennedy’s view closely reflected British military thinking on the subject. Surprisingly, though, Britain itself had only recently — and not very readily — come to the same conclusion. During the 15 years that followed World War II, Britain had become enmeshed in a

succession of counterinsurgency campaigns involving different environments (urban and rural as well as jungle and mountain) against a variety of opponents (anticolonialists, communist revolutionaries and ethno-nationalist separatists) in places as diverse as Palestine, Malaya, Kenya and Cyprus.

Counterinsurgency, née imperial policing, tactics developed to suppress earlier colonial insurrections throughout the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries were often readily adaptable to subsequent mid-20th century campaigns.³¹ Nevertheless, when the British found themselves embroiled in overseas internal security commitments after World War II, they were completely unprepared. Training exercises for troops sent to Malaya and Kenya, for example, continued to be based on lessons drawn from the conventional campaigns of World War II.

The little time devoted to counterinsurgency training mostly consisted of executing outmoded, heavy-handed “cordon and search” operations. This tactic had in fact already been discredited by Britain’s experience in Palestine during the late 1940s because of the widespread disruption to daily life and commerce among the civilian population and the anger and resentment toward the authorities that such operations engendered, though this passed unnoticed in subsequent British campaigns.³²

That U.S. military forces in Iraq have similarly applied this tactic with similar results — alienating the Iraqi civilian population³³ — underscores the overwhelming organizational tendency not to absorb historical lessons from previous counterinsurgencies when planning and conducting this particular mode of warfare.

It is interesting to note that this pathologic resistance on the part of

the military to “lessons learned” on counterinsurgency (and counterterrorism for that matter) rarely afflicts the opponents in a given conflict (i.e., guerrilla groups or terrorist organizations), who consciously study and learn both from their own mistakes as well as from the successful operations of their enemies.

This same point was made in July 2003 by General John Abizaid, the commanding general of the U.S. Central Command, responsible for all military operations in Iraq. The insurgency, he asserted, “is getting more organized, and it is learning. It is adapting to our tactics, techniques and procedures, and we’ve got to adapt to their tactics, techniques and procedures.”³⁵



Army News Service

The expansion of provincial reconstruction teams in Iraq played a critical role in the “hearts and minds” efforts in Afghanistan. Soldiers’ presence in villages made them appear to be more permanent and more familiar, and it allowed them to receive intelligence easily and to act on it within hours.

In Britain’s case, it was not until the late 1950s — a decade after Palestine had ended and Malaya had started, and while Britain was already heavily involved in both Kenya and Cyprus — that its military strategists, planners and doctrine writers realized the extent to which they had gutted their colonial-era counterinsurgency capabilities. Although the British eventually formulated a series of responses adaptable to various contingencies, they nevertheless repeated the same errors in judgment and organization at the onset of each new insurgency³⁶ until they recognized how critical political-military coordination was in waging an effective counterinsurgency.

The approach that they eventually adapted is not without relevance to America’s current involvement in Iraq: implementing a single, unified policy-and-command authority that knitted together the political and military dimensions. Authority over the course of each counterinsurgency was delegated to a single British representative who was either a retired or serving British flag officer (e.g., General Sir Gerald Templer in Malaya and Field Marshal Sir John Harding in Cyprus) but who nonetheless was thoroughly cognizant of, and committed to, waging the political as well as the military efforts against the insurgents.³⁷

This measure effectively solved the problems of bureaucratic rivalries, disconnects and infighting, thereby permitting the effective coordination of the civil administration, the military and the police; the coordination of intelligence; and, most critically, the flexibility to respond quickly, often with novel policies and tactics, to the problems at hand.³⁸

Nearly half a century later, these principles are enshrined in British Army counterinsurgency doctrine. The introduction to the counterin-

surgency section of *Army Field Manual, Vol. V, Operations Other Than War* (1995) begins with a quote from General Sir Frank Kitson, one of the best known exponents of the “British School” of counterinsurgency.

Kitson emphatically states, “The first thing that must be apparent when contemplating the sort of action which a government facing insurgency should take, is that there can be no such thing as a purely military solution because insurgency is not primarily a military activity.”³⁹ The doctrine’s statement of the fundamental principles of counterinsurgency is itself pointedly titled “A Matter of Balance.” It states unequivocally:

There has never been a purely military solution to revolution; political, social, economic and military measures all have a part to play in restoring the authority of a legitimate government. The security forces act in support of the civil authority in a milieu in which there is less certainty than in conventional war. The problem is that, working on insufficient information, at least in the early stages, decisions have to be made affecting every aspect of political, economic and social life in the country. These decisions have repercussions for the nation far beyond its borders, both in the diplomatic field and in the all-important sphere of public opinion.

Indeed, first among the six counterinsurgency principles defined by British doctrine is “political primacy and political aim” followed by:

- Coordinated government machinery.
- Intelligence and information.
- Separating the insurgent from his support.
- Neutralizing the insurgent.
- Longer-term post-insurgency planning.⁴⁰

Given that the U.S. Global War on Terrorism may likely require future nation-building efforts in

similarly violent, polarized and tyrannically ruled countries like Iraq, the ability of the American military similarly to overcome or obviate such institutional pathologies as the British once did is not without relevance.⁴¹ Indeed, in the case of the U.S. Marine Corps, lessons from the British experience had already figured prominently in their planning for postwar stability operations in Iraq. The Marines were reported to have “consult[ed] with British officers about their experiences in Belfast over the decades” before deployment. “We’ve changed our tactics midstream,” said one Marine liaison officer assigned to the populated areas in and around Nasiriyah, Iraq.⁴²

The Marine example testifies to the general molding of counterinsurgency doctrine, training and planning that has long been overshadowed by other priorities and requirements in U.S. military strategy and tactics. Indeed, perhaps the seminal American encapsulation of the essentials of counterinsurgency is the Marines’ *Small Wars Manual*,⁴³ which was first published in 1940, was reprinted in 1987 and has been republished and studied ever since. This honorable exception to the seemingly continuous process of rediscovery and reinvention of the counterinsurgency wheel⁴⁴ interestingly devotes an entire chapter to “Relationship with the State Department” — with the first section specifically addressing the “importance of cooperation.”⁴⁵

The U.S. military is, however, learning from past operational missteps and setbacks in Afghanistan. In December 2003, for instance, Lieutenant General David Barno, the commander of the American-led coalition force in Afghanistan, announced a new strategy involving, among other things, the expansion of military provincial reconstruction teams throughout the



Army News Service

Members of the 416th Civil Affairs Battalion and Turkish military observers speak to officials in the town of Tal Afar about damages to local infrastructure by insurgent activities.

country. These teams would provide reconstruction and humanitarian assistance as part of a concerted “hearts and minds” effort⁴⁶ in tandem with other units who would play an active role in the renewed hunt for Osama bin Laden by being stationed in Afghan villages for periods of time. The reasoning behind this move is that “by becoming a more permanent, familiar presence ... they hope to be able to receive and act on intelligence within hours.”⁴⁷

In Iraq as well, Marine units being deployed there in early 2004 had similarly been planning to position themselves among the population in their areas of operation — including the notoriously violent Sunni Triangle. In tactics reminiscent of the Combined Action Platoons of the Vietnam War, a Marine officer responsible for planning explained that the “idea is that this platoon, similar to Vietnam, will live and work with the police and Iraqi Civil Defense Corps.”⁴⁸

The Army has taken lessons

learned and adjusted operations to address more specifically the political dimension of counterinsurgency. For example, in the north of Iraq, Major General David H. Petraeus, the commander of the 101st Airborne Division based in Mosul, undertook precisely the types of innovative approaches with respect to the Iraqi civilian population and newly constituted Iraqi security forces long advocated by British doctrine and at the heart of effective counterinsurgency operations.⁵⁰ His main constraints were insufficient funds to accomplish all he had hoped and intended⁵¹ and some friction with the CPA.⁵² The problem, accordingly, seemed less not knowing what to do, than a flawed and mostly uneven application of counterinsurgency doctrine.

As one senior CPA official explains, “Some of these commanders have paid close attention to the lessons learned over the years [about countering insurgency] and are applying them in theater but it is not division or battalion wide. It often is

up to the individual commanders.”

So can conventional militaries effectively execute counterinsurgency missions without the extensive training that is de rigueur for special operations forces, or SOF? Judging from the U.S. military's experiences in Iraq, the answer is far from clear. The problem may be one that requires systemic changes in doctrine, organizational mindset and institutional ethos rather than providing additional training opportunities — no matter how detailed or extensive those opportunities are. As one U.S. Army Special Forces officer laments: “CT [counterterrorism] and COIN are the bread and butter of SOF, but SOF is a minority voice within a largely conventional military.”⁵⁴

Dimensions

While emphasizing the political side of counterinsurgency, Kitson was equally mindful of the fundamental military side of this equation. Indeed, Kitson forcefully stresses, “There is no such thing as a wholly political solution either, short of surrender, because the very fact that a state of insurgency exists implies that violence is involved which will have to be countered, to some extent at least, by the use of force.”⁵⁶ Essential to the effective application of that force is the acquisition of actionable intelligence, its rapid and proper analysis and, perhaps most critically, its efficacious coordination and dissemination.⁵⁷

One of the elemental imperatives of intelligence in counterinsurgency, according to Julian Paget — who served as a lieutenant-colonel in the British Army and, together with Kitson, is considered one of Britain's foremost experts on the subject — is that “every effort must be made to know the enemy before the insurgency begins.”⁵⁹ But intel-

ligence was wanting because every such effort was in fact not made, resulting in the failure to anticipate the violence and resistance that gradually escalated throughout the spring and summer of 2003. Even though, according to the *Washington Post*, the CIA station in Iraq now has more than 300 full-time case officers and nearly 500 persons in total (including contractors) compared with its originally planned complement of just 85 officers, problems in intelligence collection reportedly remain. Nonetheless, despite both this significant expansion and redirection of effort to the insurgency, senior intelligence officials and others claim, “It has had little success penetrating the resistance and identifying foreign terrorists involved in the insurgency.”⁶⁰

The inadequacies in intelligence on the insurgents can also be attributed to the focus on the search for Iraqi stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction, or WMD. Indeed, it was not until late November 2003 — when the daily pace of guerrilla attacks on American troops rose to some 40 per day — that intelligence officers and analysts were reassigned to focus on the insurgency.⁶¹

The inexperience of American forces in counterinsurgency operations and the failure of pre-invasion plans and post-invasion policy to take into account the possibility of violence and resistance occurring, much less escalating into insurgency, is likely another reason. Cordesman, for example, reports that when in November 2003 he visited the 1st Armored Division, which was responsible for Baghdad and the Green Zone, “The unit was not trained or equipped for the mission when it arrived. ... The division has had to change its whole operating style after 20 years of focusing on fighting conventional heavy forces. It has had to develop

HUMINT (human intelligence) procedures and turn away from reliance on technical intelligence sources. Even now it needs twice as many HUMINT teams as it has.”⁶²

Indeed, no less an authority than Abizaid has proclaimed that the U.S. forces require “better and more timely intelligence to crush those responsible for the roadside bombings, ambushes and mortar attacks.”⁶³

But perhaps the most important reason that the intelligence was inadequate concerns the “lesser-included contingency” status which the U.S. military has long accorded to counterinsurgency. Here, again, it is appropriate to cite Kitson's views on the subject when he writes in *Low Intensity Operations* about the necessity of “attuning men's minds to cope with the environment of this sort of war.”⁶⁴

Interestingly, the identical point is made by Joaquin Villalobos. For Villalobos, the solution to America's historical problems with counterinsurgency in general and with the intelligence needed to counter insurgencies in particular is clear. “The United States needs to transform its Soldiers, its officers, its doctrines to adapt to this kind of war.”

In no area is the intelligence hole more acute in Iraq than in the determination of insurgent identity and numbers — two of the most basic criteria. “We are quite blind there,” the head of a European intelligence service monitoring developments in Iraq complained last November. “The Americans and Brits know very little about this enemy.”⁶⁷ This poverty of definitive, much less clear, knowledge about our opponents in Iraq underscores Paget's admonition to “know the enemy.” A figure of 5,000 Iraqi insurgents or former regime elements, or FREs, also referred to as former regime loyalists, or FRLs — mostly

Sunni Muslims who belonged to the Ba'ath Party or served in the military, police or security and intelligence services — was cited by Abizaid in November 2003 and appears to be the generally accepted number.⁶⁸ It is also widely claimed that 95 percent of the attacks⁶⁹ or 95 percent of the threat⁷⁰ or more than 90 percent of the violent insurgents⁷¹ consist(s) of FREs — who either carry out attacks themselves or pay others to do so.

It is increasingly reported that hired criminals or unemployed “angry young men” are being paid by FREs to attack U.S. forces.⁷² And, according to Major General Raymond T. Odierno, the commander of the Army’s 4th Infantry Division, the bounty for attacks on coalition military targets is rising. “When we first got here,” he explained in an October 2003 interview with the press, “we believed it was about \$100 to conduct an attack against coalition forces, and \$500 if you’re successful. We now believe it’s somewhere between \$1,000 and \$2,000 if you conduct an attack, and \$3,000 to \$5,000 if you’re successful.”⁷³

These assertions mostly dovetail with what Cordesman was told when he visited the 4th Infantry a month later. Indeed, he was informed that some 70-80 percent of captured insurgents in that unit’s area of operations were paid attackers — among them criminals freed by Hussein during the invasion. Cordesman’s information diverges from these claims, however, in the area of local FREs vs. foreign jihadists. For example, in the division’s operational area, he was told, “[a]lmost all the threat is local FREs. All claim, however, that the threat is foreign”⁷⁴ — thus raising the crucial question of the number of non-Iraqis summoned to that country for the purpose of jihad.

The lack of accurate information on precisely this subject was cited by Ambassador Bremer as well. “The most critical problem,” Bremer reportedly stated, according to Cordesman’s notes of the briefing, “is intelligence.”⁷⁵

In this respect, estimates of the number of foreign fighters in Iraq range widely from the low hundreds to the low thousands.⁷⁶ According to U.S. and coalition military sources on the one hand, approximately 200-400 foreign fighters are thought to be fighting in Iraq.⁷⁷ U.S. military commanders, moreover, at least as of December 2003 had detected no indications of a large number of foreign volunteers converging on Iraq.⁷⁸ “It is not correct to say that there are floods of foreign fighters coming in, or thousands,” Abizaid has stated. Indeed, foreign nationals make up only about 300 of the 5,000 insurgents being held prisoner in Iraq.⁷⁹ Bush administration officials, on the other hand, have reportedly estimated the number of foreign jihadists in Iraq at between 1,000 and 3,000 — which is also what the Pentagon claims.⁸⁰

Whatever the number of FREs compared with foreign jihadists,⁸³ it appears clear the violence is worsening. Indeed, to a great extent, numbers are immaterial. For 20 years, a hard core of just 20 to 30 members of the Red Army Faction (Baader Meinhof Gang) effectively terrorized West Germany.

Where numbers do matter is in respect to number of attacks, number of casualties and the less easily calculated but more profound impact that the violence has on the Iraqi people’s sense of security and confidence. In these respects, both the numbers and the impact are disquieting. By early November 2003, U.S. military commanders in Iraq were themselves painting a

grim picture. According to Lieutenant General Sanchez, the average number of attacks on American forces had grown from five per day in June to “the teens” in September to 30-35 in October⁸⁶ and to 40 by the end of November.⁸⁷ The capture of Saddam Hussein in mid-December, however, brought newfound optimism that a decisive corner had been turned in the violence which, it was hoped, would now decline — even though Hussein maintained that he played no active role in directing the insurgency.⁸⁸

Nonetheless, the symbolic value of his apprehension was thought to have greater significance.⁸⁹ Indeed, a month later, U.S. military officials in Iraq were already pointing to declines both in insurgent attacks and American military casualties. The average number of daily attacks, they said, had fallen from 23 during the four weeks preceding Hussein’s capture to 18 in the four weeks since he was found. Still better news was that U.S. combat injuries had declined as well (though only slightly) — from 233 to 224 over the same time period — prompting Brigadier General Mark Hertling, assistant commander of the 1st Armored Division, to declare, “We are winning this fight.” At the same time, however, it is more significant to note that more American troops — 31 — were killed by insurgents between Dec. 14, 2003, and Jan. 10, 2004, than between Nov. 16 and Dec. 13, when 22 lost their lives in insurgent attacks.⁹⁰

Viewed from this perspective, the news is far less salutary: Despite the fact that the number of attacks declined by 22 percent over this time period, the number of fatalities actually increased by 41 percent. Accordingly, one can make the argument that the insurgents’ killing efficiency and the effectiveness of their attacks in fact

improved and that Hussein's capture did not have the impact many assumed or hoped that it would.⁹¹

It is a truism of counterinsurgency that a population will give its allegiance to the side that will best protect it. Charles Simpson made exactly this point with reference to Vietnam in his history of the U.S. Army Special Forces. "In the dirty and dangerous business of revolutionary war," he explained, "the motivation that produces the only real long-lasting effect is not likely to be an ideology, but the elemental consideration of survival. Peasants will support [the guerrillas] ... if they are convinced that failure to do so will result in death or brutal punishment. They will support the government if and when they are convinced that it offers them a better life, and it can and will protect them against the [guerrillas] ... forever."⁹⁵

Accordingly, the highest imperative of the insurgent is to deprive the population of that sense of security. Through violence and

bloodshed, the insurgent seeks to foment a climate of fear by demonstrating the authorities' inability to maintain order and thus highlight their weakness. Spectacular acts of violence, such as the suicide bombings that have rocked Iraq since August 2003, are meant to demoralize the population and undermine trust and confidence in the authorities' ability to protect and defend them.

Here, the fundamental asymmetry of the insurgency/counterinsurgency dynamic comes into play: The guerrillas do not have to defeat their opponents militarily; they just have to avoid losing.⁹⁶ And, in this respect, the more conspicuous the security forces become and the more pervasive their operations, the stronger the insurgency appears to be. Hence, the insurgent banks on the hope that the disruption caused to daily life and commerce by security-force operations countermeasures will further alienate the population from the authorities and create an impression of

the security forces as oppressors rather than protectors. This is what Major John Nagl, the operations officer for the 1st Infantry Division, found following the car bombing of an Iraqi police station that killed 24 policemen, two women and one child in December 2003. "The crowd that gathered after the blast," he recalled, "didn't seem angry at the insurgents responsible for the carnage. Instead, many of them blamed the G.I.s."⁹⁷

In a nutshell, this is what the current struggle in Iraq is all about.⁹⁸ This is clearly recognized by U.S. military commanders. "If you don't have security," Hertling observes, "you can't bring back the economic base, and the enemy is still trying to prevent that."⁹⁹ Yet this is a battle that the U.S. and coalition forces are not winning — as the mass demonstrations held in Baghdad the day after the Ashura bombings attest. "They promised to liberate us from occupation," an Iraqi insurgent explained to a United Press International reporter in December. The Americans "promised us rights and liberty," he continued, "and my colleagues and I waited to make our decision on whether to fight until we saw how they would act. They should have come and just given us food and some security. ... It was then that I realized that they had come as occupiers and not as liberators, and my colleagues and I then voted to fight."¹⁰⁰

Counterinsurgency's future

Abizaid has described the current conflict in Iraq as a "classical guerrilla-type campaign."¹⁰² The reality is that it is not — which doubtless explains why the insurgency is proving so difficult to defeat and the insurgents themselves so resilient. Unlike a "classical guerrilla-type campaign," the Iraq insurgency has



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A PSYOP Soldier passes out newspapers in Iraq in an effort to counteract insurgent claims. He also takes the time to listen to the concerns of the local populace in an effort to develop solid human intelligence about the ongoing conflict.

no center of gravity. There appears to be no clear leader (or leadership);¹⁰³ no attempt to seize and actually hold territory;¹⁰⁴ and no single, defined or unifying ideology.¹⁰⁵ Most important, there is no identifiable organization.

Indeed, none of the four stages of an insurgency defined in the CIA's renowned *Guide to the Analysis of Insurgency* seem to be relevant to the situation in Iraq. These are:

- *Preinsurgency*: Leadership emerges in response to domestic grievances or outside influences;
- *Organizational*: Infrastructure built, guerrillas recruited and trained, supplies acquired and domestic and international support sought;
- *Guerrilla warfare*: Hit-and-run tactics used to attack government. Extensive insurgent political activity — both domestic and international — may also occur simultaneously during this stage;
- *Mobile conventional warfare*: Larger units used in conventional warfare mode. Many insurgencies never reach this stage.¹⁰⁶

Rather, what we find in Iraq is the closest manifestation yet of *netwar*, the concept of warfare involving flatter, more linear networks rather than the pyramidal hierarchies and command and control systems (no matter how primitive) that have governed traditional insurgent organizations.

Netwar, as defined by the term's originators, John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, involves "small groups who communicate, coordinate and conduct their campaigns in an internetted manner, without a precise central command."¹⁰⁷ This description comes closest to explaining the insurgent phenomenon that has unfolded in Iraq since August 2003.¹⁰⁸ It is a situation in which secular Ba'athists and other FREs increasingly coop-

erate with religious extremist foreign jihadists along with domestic (Iraqi) jihadists.

In this loose, ambiguous, and constantly shifting environment, constellations of cells or collections of individuals gravitate toward one another to carry out armed attacks, exchange intelligence, trade weapons or engage in joint training and then disperse at times never to operate together again. "Here the Ba'athist/Islamic divide does not exist in a practical sense," according to a senior CPA official with direct knowledge and experience of this matter. "I wouldn't have thought it possible as they were so diametrically opposed to each other during the [Saddam Hussein] regime — but it is happening."¹⁰⁹

Accordingly, watching and studying the monumental film "The Battle of Algiers," as Pentagon officials were reported to have done in September 2003,¹¹⁰ is largely irrelevant to an enemy organized in this loose, amorphous manner. In one of the film's most compelling scenes, its main protagonist, the French paratroop commander, Lieutenant Colonel Mathieu, depicts on a blackboard the cellular structure of the FLN terrorist organization against whom they were fighting. This was described by Alistair Horne, in his seminal work on the conflict, *A Savage War of Peace*, as a "complex *organigramme* [that] began to take shape on a large blackboard, a kind of skeleton pyramid in which, as each fresh piece of information came from the interrogation centres, another name (and not always necessarily the right name) would be entered."¹¹¹

The problem in Iraq is that there appears to be no such static wiring diagram or organizational structure to identify, unravel and systematically dismantle. If that is in fact the case, then our entire strategy and approach may be irrele-

vant to the real problem at hand. "Iraq reminds us," one U.S. Army Special Forces officer notes, "that the U.S. government must adapt to a formidable opponent that is widely dispersed, decentralized and whose many destructive parts are autonomous, mobile and highly adaptive."¹¹²

It is therefore possible that the insurgency in Iraq may indeed represent a new form of warfare for a new, networked century. It is too soon to determine whether this development, involving loose networks of combatants who come together for a discrete purpose only to quickly disperse upon its achievement, will prove to be a lasting or completely ephemeral characteristic of postmodern insurgency. However, if it gains traction and is indeed revealed to be a harbinger of the future, the implications for how military forces train, equip and organize to meet this challenge and avoid preparing to fight yesterday's (mostly conventional) wars will be of paramount importance. ✂

Author's note: *This paper was researched and written during February 2004 and presented on March 6, 2004 — that is, before the author had the opportunity to visit Iraq. He subsequently served as a senior adviser on counterterrorism and counterinsurgency to the Coalition Provisional Authority in Baghdad from mid-March to mid-April. The paper also benefited tremendously from the incisive reviews provided by Lieutenant Colonel Fred T. Krawchuk, U.S. Army Special Forces, and RAND colleague Dr. Steven Hosmer. In addition, Professor Ian Beckett, Dr. Tom Marks and Dr. Gordon McCormick — along with RAND colleagues both in Washington and Baghdad — provided many other helpful comments.*

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Notes:

¹ For an interesting account of how this film is used to illuminate spiritual real-life issues, see Alex Kuczynski, "Groundhog Almighty," *New York Times* (Sunday "Fashion and Style" section), 7 December 2003.

² See, for example, Anthony H. Cordesman, *Iraq: Too Uncertain to Call* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 14 November 2003); James Fallows, "Blind into Baghdad," *The Atlantic Monthly*, Vol. 293, No. 1 (January-February 2004), pp. 52-74; Joshua Hammer, "Tikrit Dispatch: Uncivil Military," *The New Republic*, 1 March 2004; Steven Metz, "Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq," *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 27, No. 1, Winter 2003-04; and David Rieff, "Blueprint for a Mess," *New York Times Magazine*, 2 November 2003.

³ This is also the thrust of an article by Robert R. Tomes, "Relearning Counterinsurgency Warfare," *Parameters*, Spring 2004, 16-17.

⁴ Although the sources cited throughout this paper are published secondary scholarly sources or journalism accounts, the arguments presented here are based primarily on discussions held between December 2003 and February 2004 with serving American military and intelligence officers, U.S. and British officials in the CPA, and journalists who are currently in or have recently reported from Iraq.

⁶ See Christopher Dickey, "Learning from the Pros," *Newsweek*, 16 January 2004; James Dobbins et al., *America's Role in Nation-Building: From Germany To Iraq* (Santa Monica, Calif.: The RAND Corporation, MR-1753-RC, 2003), pp. 167-222; Metz, "Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq," pp. 27-28; and Rieff, "Blueprint for a Mess."

⁷ Cordesman, *Iraq: Too Uncertain to Call*, p. 2.

⁸ Quoted in Cordesman, *Too Uncertain to Call*.

⁹ See Rowan Scarborough, "US Rushed Post-Saddam Planning," *Washington Times*, 3 September 2003.

¹⁰ See the Letter to the Editor from Joseph J. Collins, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, in response to Fallows, "Blind into Baghdad," published in the April 2004 issue of *The Atlantic Monthly* at <http://www.theatlantic.com/issues/2004/04/letters.htm>. The argument that plans were commissioned and prepared but not taken into account was substantiated in discussions with U.S. Department of Defense officials, April 2004.

¹¹ Fallows, "Blind into Baghdad," pp. 73-74; and Metz, "Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq," p. 27. *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq* 3

¹² Rieff, "Blueprint for a Mess."

¹³ Email communications with a senior CPA official, Baghdad, Iraq, January and February 2004. See also Joshua Hammer, "Tikrit Dispatch: Uncivil Military," *The New Republic*, 1 March 2004.

¹⁴ As one U.S. Army officer involved in countering the insurgency observes, the real problem is that success "demands coordinated military, political, informational and economic efforts to remove the fundamental sources of strength-it is here where we are encountering our greatest difficulties." Quoted in Vernon Loeb, "Rumsfeld Seeks Better Intelligence on Iraqi Insurgents," *Washington Post*, 11 December 2003.

¹⁵ Cordesman, *Iraq: Too Uncertain to Call*, 3.

¹⁶ See Brian Knowlton, "Iraq Resistance Lasting Longer Than Expected, Powell Concedes," *International Herald Tribune* (Paris), 26 October 2003; and Lizette Alvarez, "British Official Sees No Early Exit from Iraq," *New York Times*, 5 January 2004.

¹⁷ Bruce Hoffman and Jennifer M. Taw, *Defense Policy and Low-Intensity Conflict: The Development of Britain's "Small Wars" Doctrine During the 1950s* (Santa Monica, Calif.: The RAND Corporation, R-4501-A, 1991), vii.

¹⁸ The three key British counterterrorist/counterinsurgency campaigns of the 1940s and 1950s involving Malaya, Kenya, and Cyprus; the more recent struggle in Northern Ireland (though covering only the period between 1969 and 1991); the 1965-1980 Rhodesian conflict; and the counterterrorist experiences of Germany and Italy during the 1970s and 1980s. See Bruce Hoffman and Jennifer M. Taw, *A Strategic Framework for Countering Terrorism and Insurgency* (Santa Monica, Calif.: The RAND Corporation, N-3506-DOS, 1992).

¹⁹ Hoffman and Taw, *A Strategic Framework*, 6.

²⁰ Hoffman and Taw, *A Strategic Framework*, vi, 3-6 and 77-78.

²¹ See, for example, Alex Berenson, "A Baghdad Neighborhood, Once Hopeful, Now Reels

as Iraq's Turmoil Persists," *New York Times*, 14 December 2003; Roger Cohen, "Iraq and Its Patron, Growing Apart," *New York Times*, 21 December 2003; Knights and White, "Iraqi resistance proves resilient," 24; Metz, "Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq," 27-28; and Rieff, "Blueprint for a Mess."

²⁸ Quoted in Benjamin C. Schwarz, *American Counterinsurgency Doctrine and El Salvador: The Frustrations of Reform and the Illusions of Nation Building* (Santa Monica, Calif.: The RAND Corporation, R-4042-USDP, 1991), 22. Schwarz writes that Ponce previously "served as chief of personnel and later as deputy director (essentially commander under an inactive director) of the Treasury Police-the unit of the Salvadoran armed forces most notorious for its sadistic and particularly extravagant crushing of dissent-from 1979 to 1982, the height of the period of political violence in El Salvador ... and was in fact denied a U.S. visa for years because of suspicion of human rights abuse." Footnote 12, 22.

²⁹ Between 1980 and 1990 the United States poured more than \$4.5 billion into El Salvador (\$1.3 billion in the form of direct military assistance and over \$850 million in unsubsidized credits-excluding an estimated CIA investment of over \$500 million) in an effort to defeat the communist insurgency there. American training teams and advisory personnel also oversaw the fivefold expansion, equipping, and training of the 57,000-man Salvadoran armed forces during this time period. See Schwarz, *American Counterinsurgency Doctrine*, xiii and 2; and Bruce Hoffman et al., *Lessons for Contemporary Counterinsurgencies: The Rhodesian Experience* (Santa Monica, Calif.: The RAND Corporation, R-3998-USDP, 1991), 2.

³⁰ Nagl, *Counterinsurgency Lessons*, 124.

³¹ John Pimlott, "The British Army," in Ian Beckett and John Pimlott (eds.), *Armed Forces and Modern Counter-Insurgency* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985), 16-17.

³² Hoffman and Taw, *Defense Policy and Low-Intensity Conflict*, 1.

³³ Dexter Filkins, "Dual Role of GI's difficult to juggle," *International Herald Tribune* (Paris), 3 November 2003; and Michael Knights and Jeffrey White, "Iraqi resistance proves resilient," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, November 2003, 24; and P. Mitchell Prothero, "Iraqi Guerrillas: 'Why we fight,'" *United Press International*, 4 December 2003.

³⁵ Quoted in Brian Knowlton, "Top U.S. General in Iraq Sees 'Classical Guerrilla-Type' War," *International Herald Tribune* (Paris), 16 July 2003.

³⁶ Hoffman and Taw, *Defense Policy and*

Low-Intensity Conflict, 2.

³⁷ Hoffman and Taw, *A Strategic Framework*, 9-10, 13-15.

³⁸ Hoffman and Taw, *Defense Policy and Low-Intensity Conflict*, vi.

³⁹ Quoted in DGD&D 18/34/56 Army Code No 71596 (Pts 1 & 2), Army Field Manual, vol. V, Operations Other Than War, "Section B: Counter Insurgency Operations, Part 2 The Conduct of Counter Insurgency Operations," (London: Prepared under the direction of the Chief of the General Staff, 1995), 3-1.

⁴⁰ DGD&D, Army Field Manual, vol. V, Operations Other Than War, 3-1 to 3-2.

⁴¹ As Nagl notes, this is an institutional pattern of behavior in the U.S. Army transcending half a century. See Nagl, *Counterinsurgency Lessons*, 6.

⁴² Quoted in Peter Baker, "Tactics Turn Unconventional; Commanders Draw Lessons of Belfast in Countering Attacks," *Washington Post*, 30 March 2003. See also Maass, "Professor Nagl's War."

⁴³ U.S. Marine Corps, *Small Wars Manual* (reprint of 1940 edition) (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1940), passim.

⁴⁴ Bruce Hoffman, "Current Research on Terrorism and LIC," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (1992), 31.

⁴⁵ U.S. Marine Corps, *Small Wars Manual*, 33-34.

⁴⁶ Carlotta Gall, "U.S. Military Unveils Changes in Strategy in Afghanistan," *New York Times*, 21 December 2003.

⁴⁷ David E. Sanger and Eric Schmitt, "New U.S. Effort Steps up Hunt for bin Laden," *New York Times*, 29 February 2004.

⁴⁸ Quoted in Thomas E. Ricks, "Marines to Offer New Tactics in Iraq: Reduced Use of Force Planned After Takeover from Army," *Washington Post*, 7 January 2004.

⁴⁹ Ricks, "Marines to Offer New Tactics." This point is corroborated by a senior CPA official in Baghdad. E-mail communication, January 2004.

⁵⁰ See Hammer, "Tikrit Dispatch."

⁵¹ Discussion with serving U.S. Army officer directly familiar with General Petraeus's initiatives, U.S. Military Academy, West Point, New York, February 2004.

⁵² Hammer, "Tikrit Dispatch."

⁵³ E-mail communication with senior CPA official, Baghdad, Iraq, January 2004.

⁵⁴ U.S. Army Special Forces officer, e-mail communication with the author, May 2004.

⁵⁶ DGD&D, Army Field Manual, vol. V, Operations Other Than War, 3-1.

⁵⁷ Hoffman and Taw, *A Strategic Framework*, 77.

⁵⁹ Julian Paget, *Counter-Insurgency Campaigning* (London: Faber and Faber, 1967),

163-64.

⁶⁰ Dana Priest, "Violence, Turnover Blunt CIA Effort in Iraq," *Washington Post*, 4 March 2004.

⁶¹ This entailed the reassignment of the linguists, analysts, and other experts serving in the 1,400-person Iraq Survey Group to the counterinsurgency mission from the search for WMD. See Douglas Jehl, "U.S. to Shift Some Experts from Arms to Anti-terror," *New York Times*, 27 November 2003.

⁶² Anthony H. Cordesman, *The Current Military Situation in Iraq* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 14 November 2003), 13-14.

⁶³ Eric Schmitt and David E. Sanger, "Guerrillas Posing More Danger, Says U.S.," *New York Times*, 13 November 2003.

⁶⁴ Kitson, *Low Intensity Operations*, 165.

⁶⁵ Author of, among other works, *With the Contras: A Reporter in the Wilds of Nicaragua* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987).

⁶⁶ Dickey, "Learning from the Pros."

⁶⁷ Don Van Natta, Jr. and Desmond Butler, "Hundreds of militants head to Iraq for Jihad," *International Herald Tribune* (Paris), 3 November 2003.

⁶⁸ Marianne Brun-Rovet, "Insurgents are 'few in number but organised'," *Financial Times* (London), 14 November 2003. See also, Schmitt and Sanger, "Guerrillas Posing More Danger, Says U.S.," and Jehl, "U.S. to Shift Some Experts from Arms to Anti-terror."

⁶⁹ Ambassador Bremer cited in Cordesman, *The Current Military Situation in Iraq*, p. 2.

⁷⁰ Major General Raymond T. Odierno cited in Raymond Bonner and Joel Brinkley, "Latest Attacks Underscore Differing Intelligence Estimates of Strength of Foreign Guerrillas," *New York Times*, 28 October 2003.

⁷¹ John E. McLaughlin, Deputy Director of Central Intelligence quoted in Dana Priest, "The CIA's 'Anonymous' No. 2: Low-Profile Director Leads Agency's Analytical Side," *Washington Post*, 9 January 2004.

⁷² General Abizaid quoted in Schmitt and Sanger, "Guerrillas Posing More Danger, Says U.S." See also Brun-Rovet, "Insurgents are 'few in number but organised'."

⁷³ Quoted in Bonner and Brinkley, "Latest Attacks Underscore Differing Intelligence Estimates of Strength of Foreign Guerrillas." See also Maass, "Professor Nagl's War."

⁷⁴ Cordesman, *Current Military Situation*, 25.

⁷⁵ Cordesman, *Current Military Situation*, 2.

⁷⁶ See reports such as those from June that cited American military commanders' assertions that "foreign fighters are being active-

ly recruited by loyalists to Saddam Hussein to join the resistance against American forces in Iraq." Michael R. Gordon with Douglas Jehl, "After War: Militants," *New York Times*, 22 June 2003.

⁷⁷ Ned Parker, "Suicide Bombings in Iraq Blamed on Group of Foreign Fighters," *Agence France Presse*, 30 October 2003. A former senior CIA officer in August reported that U.S. and allied intelligence estimated that 500 to 600 foreign fighters had come to Iraq. See Alissa J. Rubin, "Iraq Seen as Terror Target: Anti-Western extremists have been infiltrating and may be looking to attack symbols of America and its allies, officials say," *Los Angeles Times*, 10 August 2003. See also Michael R. Gordon, "Terror Group Seen as Back Inside Iraq," *New York Times*, 9 August 2003.

⁷⁸ General Abizaid was reported to have said in November that FREs and not foreign terrorists "pose the greatest danger to American troops and to stability in Iraq." Schmitt and Sanger, "Guerrillas Posing More Danger, Says U.S."

⁷⁹ Quoted in Desmond Butler and Don Van Natta, Jr., "Recruiters: Trail of Anti-U.S. Fighters Said to Cross Europe to Iraq," *New York Times*, 6 December 2003. This figure dovetails with that provided by Ambassador Bremer in September, when he reported that 248 foreign fighters had been apprehended in Iraq, of whom 19 were members of al Qaeda and 123 were from Syria alone. See Douglas Jehl, "Bremer Says 19 Qaeda Fighters Are in U.S. Custody in Iraq," *New York Times*, 26 September 2003. The number of al Qaeda detainees in November had increased by only one to 20, according to Lieutenant General Sanchez. See Brian Knowlton, "Iraqi Security Forces Outnumber American Troops, U.S. Says," *International Herald Tribune* (Paris), 11 November 2003. The 300 figure was also cited by American officials in December. See Desmond Butler and Don Van Natta, Jr., "Recruiters: Trail of Anti-U.S. Fighters Said to Cross Europe to Iraq," *New York Times*, 6 December 2003.

⁸⁰ Bonner and Brinkley, "Latest Attacks Underscore Differing Intelligence Estimates of Strength of Foreign Guerrillas." In September, "American military, intelligence and law enforcement figures" had put the number of foreign fighters at "as many as 1,000." See Eric Schmitt, "Iraq Bombings Pose a Mystery U.S. Must Solve," *New York Times*, 7 September 2003.

⁸³ And, in this context, it is argued that domestic American politics influence the depiction of the insurgency problem in Iraq variously as the product of FREs or foreign jihadists. For example, an account published in *Time* magazine explained that "The Bush

Administration, for its part, wants to portray the insurgency as mainly homegrown. That allows Washington to claim, as it repeatedly does, that when the die-hards run out of men and munitions, the insurgency will dissipate. It also allows Bush to avoid the charge that the war actually increased danger to the U.S. by stirring up a hornet's nest of terrorism." Bennett and Ware, "Life Behind Enemy Lines." See also Steven R. Weisman, "U.S. Presidential Politics and Self-Rule for Iraqis," *New York Times*, 18 February 2004, 56, 61, 64.

⁸⁵ Significantly, to maintain stability and order in Northern Ireland, the ratio of British security forces maintained in Northern Ireland (military plus police from the Royal Ulster Constabulary) was at a ratio of 20 security force members per 1,000 inhabitants. In Iraq, the ratio of coalition military forces to population is a considerably lower 6.1 per 1,000 inhabitants. See James T. Quinlivan, "Burden of Victory: The Painful Arithmetic of Stability Operations," *RAND Review*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (Summer 2003), 28-29. See also, idem, "Force Requirements in Stability Operations," *Parameters* (Winter 1995), 59-69, available online at <http://carlisle-www.army.mil/usawc/parameters/1995/quinliv.htm>. In a November op-ed, Edward Luttwak further underscored the inadequacy of military forces deployed to Iraq noting that "The support echelon is so large that out of the 133,000 American men and women in Iraq, no more than 56,000 are combat-trained troops available for security duties. ... For comparison, there are 39,000 police officers in New York City, and they at least know the languages of most of the inhabitants, few of whom are likely to be armed Ba'athist fanatics." Idem, "So Few Soldiers, So Much to Do," *New York Times*, 4 November 2003.

⁸⁶ John F. Burns, "General Vows to Intensify U.S. Response to Attackers," *New York Times*, 12 November 2003.

⁸⁷ Thom Shanker, "Rumsfeld, on the Ground in Iraq, Gets a Report on Progress Against the Insurgency," *New York Times*, 7 December 2003.

⁸⁸ Thom Shanker and James Risen, "Hussein Tells Interrogators He Didn't Direct Insurgency," *New York Times*, 15 December 2003.

⁸⁹ See Michael R. Gordon, "For U.S. Foes, a Major Blow: Fighters Now Lack a Symbol," *New York Times*, 14 December 2003.

⁹⁰ Figures and Brigadier General Hertling quoted in Jim Michaels, "Attacks down 22% since Saddam's capture," *USA Today* (Washington, D.C.), 12 January 2004.

⁹¹ Email correspondence with Christopher Dickey, *Newsweek's* Paris bureau chief, 2

February 2004.

⁹⁵ Charles Simpson, *Inside the Green Berets: The First Thirty Years* (Novato, Calif.: Presidio Press, 1982), 62.

⁹⁶ In Iraq, interestingly, success is in the process of being defined by U.S. military commanders in a similar vein. "If we're being held to a standard that the only way to win is have no more bombs go off, we won't live up to that," Brigadier General Hertling conceded. "Our standard is to reduce them every day. This is the hardest thing I've ever done." Quoted in Eric Schmitt, "For G.I.'s, Pride in War Efforts but Doubts About Iraq's Future," *New York Times*, 4 January 2004.

⁹⁷ Maass, "Professor Nagl's War."

⁹⁸ See, for example, the comments of Raad Khairy al-Barhawi, a Mosul city councilman who says that he wants the "Americans to succeed," but also complains of death threats and therefore wishes that the Americans will leave. Quoted in Filkins, "Attacks on G.I.'s in Mosul Rise as Good Will Fades." As one U.S. Army officer knowledgeable about counterinsurgency also notes, "There's a 'Catch-22' with military-NGO [nongovernmental organization] interface" that affects the security equation. "NGOs," he explained, "need a secure environment to do their job ... without it they can't do their work. If NGOs can't do their work, then the US military has to tackle more civic action projects to win hearts and minds. Less troops for security makes it harder to get NGOs in the field." E-mail communication with the author, May 2004.

⁹⁹ Quoted in Schmitt, "For G.I.'s, Pride in War Efforts but Doubts About Iraq's Future," 100; P. Mitchell Prothero, "Iraqi guerillas: 'Why we fight,'" *United Press International*, 4 December 2003.

¹⁰² Quoted in Knowlton, "Top U.S. General in Iraq Sees 'Classical Guerrilla-Type' War."

¹⁰³ The infamous Abu Musab Zarqawi clearly has pretensions to such a role, as evidenced by the letter he wrote to bin Laden that was seized by U.S. authorities (see "Text from Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi Letter," accessed at http://www.cpa-iraq.org/transcripts/20040212_zarqawi_full.html), but has yet to merit or achieve such a distinction.

¹⁰⁴ E-mail communication with a senior CPA official, Baghdad, Iraq, February 2004.

¹⁰⁵ Knights and White, "Iraqi resistance proves resilient," 20.

¹⁰⁶ Central Intelligence Agency, *Guide to the Analysis of Insurgency* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, no date), 3.

¹⁰⁷ John Arquilla, David Ronfeldt, and Michele Zanini, "Networks, Netwar, and Information-Age Terrorism," in Ian O. Lesser et al., *Countering the New Terrorism*

(Santa Monica, Calif.: The RAND Corporation, MR-989-AF, 1999), 47.

¹⁰⁸ It should be noted that the netwar concept as explicated by Arquilla and Ronfeldt envisioned technologically adept and information technology-savvy adversaries, exploiting IT for offensive and defensive operations. This aspect of network is certainly not apparent in Iraq.

¹⁰⁹ E-mail communication with a senior CPA official, Baghdad, Iraq, February 2004.

¹¹⁰ See, for example, Michael T. Kaufman, "What Does the Pentagon See in 'Battle of Algiers?'" *New York Times*, 7 September 2003; Philip Gourevitch, "Comment: Winning And Losing," *The New Yorker*, 22 and 29 December 2003; and, Stuart Klawans, "Lessons of the Pentagon's Favorite Training Film," *New York Times Sunday Arts and Leisure Section*, 4 January 2004.

¹⁰⁶ Central Intelligence Agency, *Guide to the Analysis of Insurgency* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, no date), 3.

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¹¹¹ Alistair Horne, *A Savage War of Peace: Algeria 1954-1962* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977), 194.

¹¹² Email communication with U.S. Army Special Forces officer, May 2004.

OPATT: The U.S. Army SF Advisers in El Salvador

by Cecil E. Bailey

Over the course of the 12-year United States military-assistance program to El Salvador, the mission of the Brigade Operational Planning and Assistance Training Team, or OPATT,¹ stands out as one of the longest running of all Special Forces missions. It was also one of the most controversial, evoking memories of the advisory role in Vietnam, the “slippery slope” that led to the U.S. combat role there.

The 55-man force cap on trainers that was imposed in El Salvador, along with other restrictions, was established in 1981 to ensure that U.S. trainers would not take on a combat role. When the first OPATT mission deployed three-man SF teams to every brigade in the Salvadoran Army in 1984, the advisers’ role appeared suspect. Their objective — to help the Salvadoran Army, or ESAF, prosecute its war more aggressively and more humanely — was a step beyond the ongoing SF training missions in El Salvador. It was believed that the assignment of SF teams at the brigade level would help the ESAF to seize the initiative while improving its performance in regard to human rights.

Initially, the operation in El Salvador was not a Special Forces mission, and only after an aborted effort

was it recognized as a foreign internal defense, or FID, mission that logically belonged to SF.³ Once fielded, the SF teams were tasked with one of the most critical U.S. missions of the ground war, yet they operated in the brigades with little support, no leverage and abundant scrutiny.

For nearly eight years, OPATTs cycled through the brigades, each one extending the progress of the preceding team. Their achievements and successes must be judged by the cumulative effect of their influence on increasing ESAF counterinsurgency capabilities over time and especially on improving the ESAF’s human-rights record. The OPATT concept is now being revived in Colombia for the war on drugs, and it may have potential for use in countries now struggling with terrorist threats. In order to determine lessons that can be applied to future advisory missions, this article examines the ad hoc way in which the brigade OPATT mission developed and how the teams dealt with their mission environment.

Background

Conditions in El Salvador had been building toward revolution for decades, and the 1979 victory of the

Sandinistas in Nicaragua encouraged the Salvadoran leftist movement to coalesce into a single organization, the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front, or FMLN. The FMLN began an armed rebellion in 1980, and in 1981 it attempted an offensive to seize power in El Salvador. Even though the offensive failed to spark the popular uprising that the FMLN hoped would enable it to seize control of the government, the offensive underscored the FMLN’s strengths and the ESAF’s weaknesses.

The Salvadoran Army had no experience, training or doctrine for counterinsurgency warfare. Much of the army’s manpower was committed to static defense of critical sites and the economic infrastructure, forfeiting its offensive potential. The FMLN, on the other hand, demonstrated an impressive capability for coordinating operations nationwide. Even after the 1981 offensive failed, the FMLN managed to hold the initiative in the field, operating freely throughout the countryside in a protracted guerrilla campaign designed to demoralize the army and cripple the economic infrastructure.

To counter advantages accruing to the insurgents, a team of U.S.

officers, led by Brigadier General Fred F. Woerner, worked with the ESAF general staff to develop a survival strategy of immediate expansion and rapid modernization to get the army on the offensive.⁶ To support this strategy, SF teams were sent to train the Salvadoran Army into a force capable of holding back the FMLN until the ESAF was strong enough to seize the initiative.

This expansion effort took the ESAF from a 9,000-man, poorly trained, poorly equipped force to a capable and effective counterinsurgency force of 40,000 by 1984.⁷ For the army, the cornerstone of the program to seize the initiative was the creation of five 1,000-man immediate-reaction infantry battalions, or Batallones de Infantería de Reacción Inmediata, or BIRI, to provide a strategic-deployment capability for the army's general staff, or Estado Mayor.⁸

By 1983 it was clear that the security-assistance program to El Salvador would be a longer endeavor than expected only two years before.⁹ U.S. advisers also recognized the need to move the training program beyond small-unit training and to work with the six Salvadoran brigades to improve their staff operations and their coordination between the brigade and national levels. There simply were not enough trainer positions to permit this until the National Training Center in La Unión was activated in early 1984, making the ESAF less dependent on SF mobile training teams, or MTTs, for its infantry training, and thus freeing up a number of the 55 trainer positions.

Additionally, the short-term MTTs that typically deployed for no more than six months with specific and limited training purposes did not provide the continuity needed to effectively advise at



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The creation of five 1,000-man immediate-reaction infantry battalions was key in the Salvadoran army's expansion and defense against the FMLN.

brigade level. Any serious attempt to influence brigade operations needed to be a long-term effort, with advisers programmed for successive assignments. The U.S. security-assistance mission that provided deployments of up to one year was the ETSS — engineering and technical services specialists, later renamed extended training service specialists.¹⁰ ETSS were already being used to provide advisers for other missions in El Salvador, and they would be used to deploy advisers to the brigades when the OPATT mission began in 1984. But first the 1983 National Campaign Plan had to demonstrate what a U.S. advisory presence could do for ESAF operations.

The national campaign plan

The OPATT concept got a trial run during planning for the 1983 National Campaign Plan, or NCP. The NCP was a combined civil-military campaign designed to jump-start the reconstruction of

Salvadoran public services and infrastructure while enhancing popular support for the government. The departments of San Vicente and Usulután were selected to host the pilot project, after which the plan was to be implemented nationwide.

At the same time the Estado Mayor was developing the NCP, a team from the 3rd Battalion, 7th Special Forces Group, based in Panama, was in San Salvador training ESAF officers in internal defense and development, or IDAD. The commander of the U.S. Military Group, or MILGP, Colonel John D. Waghelstein, directed the leader of the SF team, Major Peter Stankovich, to review the plan with Salvadoran planners already involved in the preparations. Working with senior military officers and civilian officials, Stankovich's team helped develop a detailed plan to be executed under the direction of a Salvadoran joint task force, or JTF, to establish security throughout the

brigade zone and create conditions favorable to civil reconstruction.¹¹

Because of his involvement in planning for the NCP, Stankovich joined a 10-man team sent by the United States Southern Command, or USSOUTHCOM, to help the Salvadoran JTF execute its plan. The military component of the plan worked well because the JTF controlled the majority of the army's deployable ground forces and had a complete, well-organized staff.¹² But after six months of intense operations, the ESAF could not sustain the campaign. As operations slowed in September, the JTF was disbanded. Most of the USSOUTHCOM team returned to Panama.

The follow-on phase planned for Usulután was abandoned and the FMLN gradually reinfiltred the Department of San Vicente. Even though the NCP failed in its objective, Stankovich's 1983 experience with the 5th Brigade and the experimental JTF demonstrated the value of experienced and

knowledgeable advisers during the planning and coordination of operations.

The 1984 mission

Waghelstein saw only the beginning of the NCP before Colonel Joseph S. Stringham replaced him as MILGP commander in July 1983. Despite the failure of the NCP, Stringham felt it demonstrated the viability of small teams of U.S. advisers in the Salvadoran brigades. Based on the experience in San Vicente, he approached the Estado Mayor in late 1983 with a recommendation that advisory teams be assigned to each of the six brigade headquarters.

It was agreed that teams would be composed of a lieutenant colonel as team chief and a captain as training officer, both assigned for one-year ETSS tours, augmented by a Military Intelligence, or MI, officer on a six-month tour. All of the team members would be Army officers, except those assigned to the 6th brigade in Usulután, which

was to have advisers from the U.S. Marine Corps.¹³

The concept was for each team chief to work with the brigade staff to improve planning and operations capabilities. The training officer was to advance the brigade's training program, while the MI officer would work to improve intelligence operations.

The U.S. Embassy had another motive for getting the teams quickly identified and deployed. Salvadoran presidential elections were scheduled for May 1984, and the embassy wanted to have U.S. officers inside each Salvadoran brigade to monitor the Salvadoran armed forces.¹⁴ The elections went well, although some brigade commanders were far from enthusiastic about having the U.S. teams suddenly placed inside their headquarters and expressing a serious interest in the way they ran their brigade.

Brigade commanders object

Within months after the lieutenant colonels arrived, the brigade commanders were registering objections: The captains were acceptable; the colonels were not.¹⁵ Part of the issue was that some of the rank-conscious Salvadoran staff officers felt that their authority was challenged by an adviser of equivalent or senior rank.¹⁶ But there was more to the objection than rank. According to the 1st Brigade OPATT team chief, Lieutenant Colonel James Roach: "I know that the brigade commanders weren't comfortable with [us] because we were bold enough to ask questions about their plans and operations. And the brigade commanders wanted people who responded ... instead of asking questions."¹⁷

By late summer, the new U.S. MILGP commander, Colonel James



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Until 1985, no efforts were made in El Salvador to influence popular support for the government through civic-action programs like the one being run above by members of the 96th Civil Affairs Battalion. Civic-action missions are designed to show the populace that the government can meet its basic needs.

J. Steele, announced that the OPATT lieutenant colonels would be moved to new positions specifically created for them elsewhere.¹⁸ The MI captains continued only until their six-month assignments expired, and the Army could not find six Spanish-speaking MI captains to replace them.¹⁹ Only the captains assigned as training officers stayed on in the brigades. The MILGP's attention shifted to other matters, leaving the OPATT mission in limbo. It was not revisited until mid-1985.

The 1985 mission

1984 was a pivotal year for the ESAF. Expansion of the Salvadoran armed forces appeared sustainable, and the logistics flow was adequately supporting the ESAF's operations tempo. All five of the BIRIs were in the field.²⁰ The Salvadoran Air Force, which had been essentially destroyed on the ground during the January 1982 FMLN attack on Ilopango, had been rebuilt with aircraft more suited for counterinsurgency, such as UH-1 Huey helicopters and A-37 Dragonfly close-air-support jets.²¹ By mid-1984, if there was little hope of defeating the FMLN, there was confidence that the Salvadoran military was itself no longer at risk of defeat.

With the ESAF now capable of preventing an FMLN victory, the MILGP assessed that it was time to shift its strategic focus toward efforts to influence popular support for the government, an essential part of counterinsurgency warfare that had been all but ignored to that point in the war. This meant trying to engage the ESAF in low-intensity conflict, or LIC, missions promoting civil defense, or CD; civic action; and psychological operations, or PSYOP.

U.S. advisers, several of whom

had been the team chiefs in the 1983 OPATT mission, were in place at the Salvadoran national level for each of these missions, but no supporting U.S. effort to push the missions existed in the brigades, where most of these activities would have to be managed. This was the argument that MILGP commander Steele took to the Estado Mayor in mid-1985 for once again having U.S. advisers assigned to the brigades.

The concept agreed to by the Estado Mayor was little different from the earlier plan, but it was adjusted to address the difficulties experienced during the 1984 mission. The plan called for each brigade headquarters to have a three-man team of U.S. advisers assigned: a combat-arms major, preferably with an SF background, and two SF NCOs or warrant officers with training and experience in operations and intelligence, or O&I.²²

In the 1985 mission, unlike its predecessor, all team positions were to be year-long ETSS assignments in order to improve mission continuity and avoid the personnel turbulence associated with MTTs. Having a major leading the team instead of a lieutenant colonel defused the rank issue. While working to improve O&I integration, the team was tasked to focus directly on the missions the ESAF tended to disregard — CD, civic action and PSYOP — but which were now key components of the advisory mission.

Qualification, selection

The OPATT mission required less than half of the 55 trainers permitted in country — generally fewer than 20. With such a small number of advisers allowed for the mission, and with six brigades to support, it was critical to ensure

that only qualified officers and NCOs were assigned to the teams. This was relatively easy with the O&I ETSS positions, which were filled in less than six months from the field of experienced senior NCOs and warrant officers, or WOs, from the 3rd Battalion, 7th SF Group. Most SF senior NCOs and WOs had O&I education and experience, and they were capable linguists as the result of both formal training and practice on multiple training missions in the region. It was more difficult with the team chiefs.

Because SF did not yet exist as a separate career-management field, there could be no guarantee that SF-qualified officers would be selected for the mission. The MILGP commander, anxious to get teams into the brigades quickly, began to "recruit" officers who were personally and professionally known by SF officers already in El Salvador, and to request them by name for the assignment. Desired qualifications included: combat-arms major or promotable captain with line-company command experience, battalion or higher staff experience, advanced-course completion and language skill.²³

Not surprisingly, most officers in the initial selection, like the NCOs and WOs, had served in the 3rd Battalion, 7th SF Group. Most had extensive experience in the region from numerous MTTs in El Salvador and Honduras, and significantly, most had worked professionally with each other in past assignments. This would become important in efforts to help ESAF units coordinate their operations.

Even though the Army's requirement was for only five officers per year, the preference for SF majors shrank the field of eligibles considerably, and the informal screening



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The Salvadoran army had to be taught the importance of human rights. Violations of basic human rights escalated violence in the country and caused protests against the government.

of known officers had the effect of further reducing the number of candidates. Finding qualified officers for OPATT assignment had gotten difficult enough by 1990 to prompt the MILGP operations officer, Major Francisco J. Pedrozo, to travel to Washington for discussions with the Special Forces Branch (established in 1987) to find a solution. Holding strictly to qualifications established by the MILGP, the SF Branch prepared a list of all SF officers who were qualified for the duty. What the branch found was startling: There were only 17 names on the list. Nearly half of those officers were already in El Salvador, and about the same number had returned during the past year. There were only three or four candidates in all of SF who were fully qualified for assignment to El Salvador as a brigade adviser — and the mission required five officers per year. Pedrozo realized, “The pool was exhausted.”²⁴

Actually, the pool had been quite small from the outset. Allowing for approximately five years between promotion to major and promotion to lieutenant colonel, it would be difficult for officers to acquire all the assignments and professional education that would qualify them for OPATT duty and still be available for the assignment.

An additional discriminator was language. The initially-required 3/3 reading and speaking level (5/5 is the equivalent of native fluency),²⁵ was lowered to 2/2 for officers, and the SF Branch made an effort to ensure that at least one of the other members of the team in each brigade had a higher language capability. For all of the compromises on ETSS requirements that the MILGP was willing to make at this point in the war, the preference for SF officers remained firm, and no compromise was considered on the O&I requirement.²⁶ Fortunately, the 1990 shortage would not matter

for long, as there was only one more iteration of OPATT assignments to fill before the peace plan went into effect in December 1991.

Defining the mission

The OPATT mission in 1985 was driven by assessments that the ESAF expansion program was close to completion and that the ESAF’s capability for conducting its own tactical-level training was progressing satisfactorily. Although the SF advisers continued to monitor and assist unit training programs, their attention turned to staff operations so that they could improve coordination between the brigade and national levels and could advance operational coordination with adjacent military detachments, or DM (destacamento militar). Staffing the OPATTs with two O&I ETSS personnel gave the team the flexibility to deploy to other headquarters in the brigade zone, effectively influencing the action in several brigade units at the same time. In some cases, O&I ETSS personnel were deployed full-time to subordinate DMs and tasked with performing the complete OPATT mission.

The only significant changes in the original mission over the course of the war involved human-rights enforcement and implementation of the 1991 Peace Plan. In 1990, the mission of monitoring and reporting suspected human-rights violations was added.²⁷ Then, after the peace plan was signed in December 1991, new guidance reflected the approaching end of the war:

Presently, all training activities are restricted to the cuartel and must be coordinated with United Nations Observers. Advisory assistance is now more concerned with civic action, psychological operations and garrison operations and the development of peacetime unit

*training management systems. Peacetime training activities should increase in the future as the FMLN is demobilized and disarmed. Possible human rights incidents continue to be monitored and reported.*²⁸

Interestingly, it is rare to find a brigade adviser who recalls having seen what he considered a mission statement. All of the veterans express an understanding that their mission was to improve combat effectiveness of the brigades and to do what they could to influence human-rights performance. Major Christopher St. John recalled no formal mission being given him during predeployment activities and none when he arrived in El Salvador in September 1986 as OPATT team chief to the 2nd Brigade. Reflecting on the frenetic atmosphere inside the U.S. Embassy, which was caught up in its own priorities, St. John noted that upon his arrival, “I read two three-ring binders of policy ... signed that I read them, was sworn in as a Regular Army officer ... and left for Santa Ana. ... I didn’t meet Colonel Steele [the MILGP commander] during my first 100 days in El Salvador. The other OPATTs helped the most in telling me what was going on and what I needed to do.”²⁹ Briefings for new arrivals at the Embassy are remembered as “telling me what not to do ... nothing about what to do.”³⁰

The reliance on other advisers for mission guidance often began during deployment preparation. OPATTs always knew in advance to which brigade they were assigned, permitting incoming and outgoing advisers to agree between themselves on what needed to be done to build on past progress, to continue effective programs and to avoid those activities certain to waste time and resources.

Once in country, advisers routine-

ly communicated with each other, exchanging information and ideas, and confirming the “azimuth” for their mission. Instruction by anyone else was often considered irrelevant: The ground truth for their mission existed in the minds of those who were immersed in it. Isolated from anyone who could assess what they did, they discounted guidance from others when it contradicted the reality of the brigade’s circumstances.

Major Gregory Banner recalled an example of guidance he received during a visit by a MILGP staff officer to the 2nd Brigade headquarters in Santa Ana, “He does not understand. I am on the practical level of trying to figure out how to get things done, he is talking theory.”³¹

Variations of that complaint were common. For the OPATTs, any instruction beyond a general mission statement would only have clouded their vision of how to get the job done, when so much depended on circumstances that were unique to each brigade. Few “outsiders” understood how different the brigade zones were in terms of terrain, threat and a host of other factors. Fewer still understood how supremely critical the very personality of the brigade commander could be in determining the way the advisers approached their missions.

Counterpart relations

The SF maxim about the necessity of establishing rapport with one’s counterpart in order to be effective was never truer than for brigade advisers in El Salvador. They had no authority beyond that agreed upon with their counterpart — the brigade commander. They held no leverage with their counterparts since they controlled none of the resources provided to the brigades

by U.S. security assistance. They commanded no support capabilities for combat or logistics, although they could influence intelligence activities.

The shift in priorities after 1985 meant that they would spend less time on training, which most brigade commanders valued, and their new objectives were in precisely those subjects that their counterparts cared about the least — which included monitoring and reporting human-rights violations. Finally, assorted policy and administrative “rules” constrained what the advisers were permitted to do and when and where they were allowed to go.

In SF vernacular, getting the job done under these kinds of circumstances required exceptional rapport with one’s counterpart — an ability to communicate and have suggestions well-received. It also depended on the brigade commander’s attitude toward advisers, and that was mixed. Some commanders were simply too reticent to be won over. Some were also notorious human-rights offenders, or they were known to be involved in illegal profiteering. This obviously complicated the relationship, but the brigade commander was rarely put off-limits to the OPATT.

Although the brigade commander was the principal counterpart, advisers tended to consider anyone who was receptive to assistance to be a viable counterpart. Generally, the advisers focused their attention on the operations and intelligence staffs. That’s where the action was, and both staffs were central to other missions, especially CD and PSYOP, that required staff support. But the brigade commander was always the central figure. Working directly with him or with his staff, advisers sought ways to help the commander achieve his goals.

One of the reasons SF Soldiers

were preferred for the mission in El Salvador was that the FID mission tasked to SF included the role of working with host-nation counterparts — advisory work. The value of repetitive regional tours that are common during a career in SF was critical in El Salvador. It was a significant advantage to have a resource pool of Soldiers experienced in dealing with the idiosyncrasies of Salvadoran culture and the military's role in it.

A review of the list of officers and NCOs who served on OPATTs illustrates the point. Many of the officers had several tours in the region. Some had multiple tours in El Salvador alone. Virtually all of the NCOs grew from junior to senior rank as they served in a variety of missions throughout the region during the 1980s and the 1990s. It was common for them to have crossed paths over the years with the same officers with whom they were working to train and lead battalions in counterinsurgency.

Clearly, adviser-counterpart relations were not uniform. Some advisers reported positive and comfortable relationships, and others reported the opposite. Personal and professional factors could combine with cultural differences to make for trying circumstances, especially against the backdrop of the drawn-out insurgency.

Effect of restrictions

The restriction against U.S. military members accompanying ESAF units on operations was especially onerous to the advisers, who often cited the restriction as affecting not only their relationship with their counterpart but also their professional credibility. The restriction was rooted in the trainer vs. adviser issue and in the ongoing concern of the U.S. Congress about

the advisory role being the first step onto the slippery slope toward a full engagement of American forces in a ground war in Central America.

If one was a trainer and not an adviser, went the official reasoning, he didn't need to go on combat operations — a logic that supported casualty-averse policies but frustrated adviser-counterpart relationships.³² Although the restriction chafed most advisers, they believed that their counterparts generally understood the reasons behind it.

But the advisers also insisted that the restrictions remained a credibility and rapport issue, and they also viewed the restriction as limiting their ability to influence counterparts. Major William R. Neelson, the 1st Brigade OPATT, recounted, "Not the brigade commander, but some of the junior officers were pretty curious about why

you were cuartel-bound. I think certainly if we had been able to selectively go out, it would have enhanced our ability to establish rapport at the junior levels."³³

There was also the conclusion that junior officers wanted U.S. advisers in the field with them, having seen their leadership example in training. Most senior officers were in no position to question the restriction, since so few of them accompanied operations in the field.

Ignoring the potential policy implications, some advisers went on operations anyway. Isolated from anyone who could enforce the rule, they would have a problem only if something went wrong. The joke among advisers who skirted the rule was, "Just remember to tell someone, 'If I get killed, drag my body back to the cuartel, call the Embassy and report a terrible training accident.'" A common be-



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Working as counterparts, Special Forces Soldiers worked to bring more professionalism to the Salvadoran army by teaching basic soldiering skills, such as map reading.

lief among advisers was that the Embassy, including the MILGP, winked at the rule anyway, accepting that brigade advisers could go on operations any time they wanted and that no one in the Embassy would ever know.

This uneven practice among the advisers did not escape the notice of the Salvadorans, who sometimes chided those who would not accompany them on operations. It became one of the few issues of contention among the otherwise close group. Those advisers who broke the rule insisted that they had to if they were to be effective — their credibility was at stake. Those who stuck to the rule argued that the risk of being caught disobeying a Congressional mandate far outweighed any passing esteem that might be gained from their Salvadoran counterparts.

After advisers began visiting forward command posts in late 1986, it was easier for them to see how operations were being managed at that level. But advisers' analysis of company-level combat operations conducted in the field was still based on what the adviser could gather from after-action reports or from discussions with individuals who had been on the operations. It was common for the information from soldiers to conflict with after-action reports by their leaders, and the conflict generally was due to more than a mere difference in perspective.³⁴

Human rights

Every aspect of the U.S. security-assistance program was tied to the Salvadoran armed forces' respect — or disregard — for human rights. No one from the U.S. mission was more deeply involved in enforcing human rights than the SF advisers who lived and worked inside Salvadoran units. Enforcing human

rights was a delicate undertaking, given the ESAF's connection with the atrocities and abuse that characterized Salvadoran contemporary history, and it put the advisers center stage in the most sensitive issue of the war. Proximity and purpose thrust them into a multiple roles: observer, reporter and moderator of ESAF behavior. If need be, they could take on the potentially risky role of being an object of intervention.

Advisers interpreted their mis-

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sion as carrying the explicit objective of improving ESAF behavior across all operations. They saw human rights as being essential to any chance of success in the counterinsurgency effort. Specifically, the ESAF needed to be perceived by the population as being on their side.³⁵

For the Salvadorans, human rights were a practical matter. Prior to 1982, the ESAF practice regarding prisoners was to take none.³⁶ Even as late as 1985, indications were that not much had changed.³⁷ The decline in human-rights violations by the Salvadoran military after 1981 may also illus-

trate how ESAF human-rights performance was related to military aid.³⁸ The U.S. Congress insisted on measurable improvement, or aid money would be cut off; the ESAF needed the aid, so they "improved." The extent to which improvement was genuine remained difficult to judge, and it was even more difficult to evaluate during combat operations because U.S. advisers were not allowed to accompany their Salvadoran units on operations.

Human rights were a practical matter for the OPATTs as well. All of them understood the Law of Land Warfare and all its attendant international conventions.³⁹ None of the OPATTs harbored illusions about how critical the issue was to the rest of their mission. The way they approached the subject reflected the absolute necessity of finding common ground for communicating with their counterparts on such a sensitive issue.⁴⁰ Neelson, with nearly three years in El Salvador, had this view of human-rights guidance:

It was very, very delicate because almost everybody had ... something in their closet, ... I came to understand that my most important role was getting the ESAF to respect human rights without ever mentioning that term, because that was a real turn-off. ... I approached it from a very practical sense, just talked about the practicality of observing human rights, that you would lessen the recruitment for the enemy, it makes your job easier and you can get to the end of this thing, that there's a reason they are guerrillas and part of the reason is the awful performance of the ESAF.⁴¹

The OPATTs, unlike any other U.S. effort with the Salvadoran army, were positioned to reinforce all the human-rights instruction that had gone before. For example, while advising the 1st Brigade in



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Restrictions placed on SF Soldiers that forbade them from going on patrol with the Salvadoran soldiers were seen as problematic. Advisers felt that the restrictions affected their relationships with their counterparts, as well as their credibility.

1985, Neelson realized that on operation after operation, units from his brigade returned without prisoners.

He was convinced that there had to be guerrillas who tried to surrender but were killed on the battlefield. Sergeant First Class William Strobel, O&I NCO on the team, had helped build a facility in the brigade for interrogating prisoners and had trained interrogators and analysts on how to professionally and humanely extract information from prisoners to produce actionable intelligence. But he lacked live prisoners.

Neelson cajoled his counterpart to deliver them: "I convinced [the brigade commander and intelligence officer] to just humor me one time ... bring in some prisoners and let's see how it turns out. ... They brought back four prisoners that night.⁴² Strobel explained what typically ensued during interrogation once his staff began to get prisoners:

We could capture a prisoner at last light and be rolling up the cell at daybreak before the D/Ts, (or delincuente/terrorista),⁴³ knew the

guy was captured. That was what it was designed for, rapid information extraction so that the brigade could capture more people before they could shut down and move on. [Throughout], human rights were always a concern ... [they] were addressed and documented. Physical means of extracting information were never used.⁴⁴

The human-rights/intelligence symbiosis helped advance other mission areas, as well. In some cases the intelligence became the cornerstone for civic action, and it was almost always the case for CD and PSYOP. But the prisoner issue in the 1st Brigade underscores that it was only through OPATT persistence and influence at the brigade commander's level — the level that counted most — that action was directed to handle prisoners in a way that made sense rather than to senselessly dispose of them under the convenient circumstance of combat.

One persuasive study, which used data gathered by the United Nations Truth Commission,⁴⁵ gave large credit to the OPATT mission

for the decline in human-rights violations by the ESAF during the war. The study notes that the lion's share of abuses accrued to the five BIRIs and that, among them, the BIRI Atlacatl Battalion's record of violence was triple that of the other BIRIs.⁴⁶ SF Soldiers trained all of them. BIRI Belloso was the only one trained in the U.S., and three others were trained in Honduras.⁴⁷ Only the BIRI Atlacatl was trained in El Salvador, giving it the least exposure to U.S. values. Once trained, none of the BIRIs had a U.S. advisory presence assigned, while the rest of the army did.

How much of the Salvadoran Army's human-rights progress can be attributed to the brigade OPATTs is difficult to judge, since many factors could have contributed to the improvement. Threats by the U.S. Congress to cut off aid, doubtless a powerful motivator, guaranteed a measure of progress. How that compares with progress achieved through years of persistent pressure by the U.S. advisers in the brigade can only be conjectured. In El Salvador's case, both motivators were probably necessary. However, the advisory presence in the brigades, with a charter to monitor and report on their behavior, was a powerful influence for compelling the ESAF to consider the effect of its conduct, not only on the battlefield, but also in its relations with the Salvadoran citizenry in general.

Negotiation, demobilization

The December 1991 Peace Accords set an unfamiliar course for everyone involved in the 12-year struggle in El Salvador. Both the FMLN and the ESAF maneuvered to preserve their hard-won gains, hedging against risks that the peace might collapse. The U.S. advisers transitioned to "peacetime

training activities,” and they joined the ESAF in having their role monitored by third-party U.N. observers. The war was essentially over, and soon so was the OPATT mission. By June 1991, several of the NCO positions were phased out as tours ended. Officers began to leave as well, partly by attrition as tours ended and partly by design as they were assigned other jobs now more important in a post-war El Salvador. By mid-summer 1993, no U.S. advisers were left in the brigades.

Conclusions

From the outset, the idea for a U.S. presence in the Salvadoran brigades was not a very clear one, in the sense of what the mission was to accomplish and how the teams were to perform it. The hasty deployment of the teams for the 1984 elections seemed reasonable, but methods for fielding successive missions do not appear to have been considered. It may have been fortuitous that the Salvadorans broke up the mission rather than having it fail because the Army either could not fill the slots or because it filled them with “best available personnel.”

The rejection of the lieutenant colonels during the 1984 OPATT mission is less instructive about organizing a FID training and advisory mission than it is about dealing with a host who may not want advice and does not want someone looking over his shoulder. Whether the lieutenant colonels were the right officers for the job is a fair question. The advisory role is a specific FID mission for SF; advising host-nation forces in fighting a counterinsurgency should have been tasked to SF from the beginning.

The organization of the 1985 mission is instructive because it

was recognized as a FID mission and, except for the USMC OPATT in Usulután, SF officers and NCOs filled all of the positions on the teams. This permitted the MILGP to rely on the pool of regionally experienced and culturally oriented personnel in the 7th SF Group, whose specific mission area is Latin America.

The informal recruiting and vetting arrangement worked well in El Salvador’s case, but it is a poor way to organize that kind of mission. The mission defaulted to SF

Contemporary studies evaluating the U.S. military role in El Salvador often praise the brigade advisers as being the leading contributors to ESAF combat effectiveness, improved human-rights performance and professional behavior supporting constitutional democratic values.

Soldiers because they were eager to get the brigade-adviser assignments when those in other branches in the Army were not. Once SF was established as a branch in 1987, it should have undertaken the responsibility for selecting and assigning officers to OPATT duty and, given the nature and importance of the mission, should have scrutinized candidates with the same diligence as did the MILGP.

The one-year assignment for OPATT duty has often been criticized as being too brief for such a

mission; nevertheless, it was a tremendous improvement over the six-month MTTs, and it permitted the continuity essential for effectively advising and making an enduring impact. Provisions existed within the security-assistance program for extending beyond the one-year limit for ETSS assignments, and a number of the OPATT team members did serve longer tours. But the difficulty of filling the team-chief positions with SF majors for the one-year tours suggests that it would have been even more difficult to fill the positions if the tours had been longer. That difficulty should alert future advisory missions to resist arbitrary restrictions on rank imposed by the host country, when those restrictions will constrain the field of candidates for the mission.

Measuring the effectiveness of the brigade OPATT mission would be a daunting task. One indicator, however, was the FMLN’s insistence during peace-plan negotiations that the OPATTs remain in the cuartels through demobilization and reorganization as their best insurance against any ESAF change of heart during those processes.⁴⁸ The OPATTs’ effectiveness was reinforced by FMLN commander Joaquín Villalobos’ observation after hostilities ended that putting American advisers in the brigades was the most damaging thing that happened to them during the war. He believed that, as the advisers’ influence on ESAF made them more professional and less abusive, the FMLN lost much of its earlier propaganda advantage and recruiting appeal.⁴⁹

OPATT after-action reports and interviews, occasionally exuberant about achievements, ambivalently express acute frustration over their perceived failure to accomplish objectives that they mainly set for themselves. Yet contempo-

rary studies evaluating the U.S. military role in El Salvador often praise the brigade advisers as being the leading contributors to ESAF combat effectiveness, improved human-rights performance and professional behavior supporting constitutional democratic values.⁵⁰

That is significant, considering the small numbers of advisers involved and the magnitude of the task. From the 1985 mission through FMLN demobilization and ESAF reorganization at the end of 1992, just over 140 SF officers and NCOs served as advisers to a 40-battalion army of 40,000 men scattered across the country in 14 garrisons with responsibilities for the security of dozens of critical sites and hundreds of civil-defense units. It was one of those rare assignments that attracted SF Soldiers because they believed the mission was important and that it was “theirs” to accomplish. They knew that they could make a difference, and they were willing to pay the price to do it. ✂

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Notes:

¹ The mission title of OPATT was applied to many deployments supporting security assistance to El Salvador, including support and technical functions. The acronym OPATT here refers to the brigade advisory missions. The term OPATT originated in the program for El Salvador and has not been used since.

³ Richard Duncan Downie, *Learning From Conflict, The U.S. Military in Vietnam, El Salvador, and the Drug War* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger Publishers, 1998), 99-102. Downie discusses the FID mission in support of LIC doctrine as an advisory and training role.

⁶ General Fred Woerner, interview with Kalev Sepp, 7 May 1998, 114.

⁷ A.J. Bacevich, et al., *American Military Policy in Small Wars: The Case of El Salvador* (Cambridge, Mass.: Pergamon Brassey's, 1988), 4.

⁸ Before the BIRIs were fielded, the general staff had no strategic-maneuver capability. Most infantry capability resided within the command of the departmental commanders and was not routinely deployed outside the department.

⁹ Woerner interview.

¹⁰ Security Assistance Management Manual, DD 5105.38 5, February 2002, <http://www.dscs.osd.mil/samm/samm_ch1.pdf> 8. The SAMM defines ETSS as DoD military and civilian personnel technically qualified to provide advice, instruction and training in the installation, operation and maintenance of weapons, equipment and systems. ETSS may be provided for up to one year, unless a longer period is specifically approved by DSCA.

¹¹ Stankovich interview, 18 May 2003. Round-the-clock operational saturation of the zone with four of the newly formed BIRIs and several Cazador battalions supported by artillery, air force and a constant flow of real-time intelligence developed by the JTF intelligence staff.

¹² Stankovich interview 18 May 2003. Stankovich worked with the joint task force commanded by Colonel Rinaldo Golcher. Most of the JTF was staffed by recent graduates of the ESAF Command and General Staff School — all recent students of Stankovich's San Vicente IDAD course.

¹³ The reason for the decision to make Usulután a USMC OPATT is unclear. The 6th brigade area of operations was coastal swamp land and an ingress route for arms infiltration, suggesting a need for USMC expertise, notwithstanding that the brigade was an Army unit. After it was designated for fill by the USMC in the 1984 mission, the MILGP decided not to change it.

¹⁴ El Salvador had promulgated a new constitution in 1983 that called for the elections in May 1984. This was a crucial election from the U.S. view, because since it was seen as the acid test of the military's willingness to support a free democratic process, especially since the Christian Democrat candidate, favored by the U.S., was Napoleon Duarte, whom the military had deposed and exiled after he won the 1972 presidential elections.

¹⁵ James Roach, e-mail to the author, 11 April 2003. Colonel Sigifredo Ochoa, commander of the 4th Brigade in El Paraiso, and perennial nemesis to American advisers, was reported as the leader of the effort to remove the unwelcome lieutenant colonels. In Manwaring and Prisk, Ochoa,

referring to U.S. assistance, is quoted as saying: “Specifically, I asked them to give me sergeants or captains but no colonels — the colonels who were here spent their time playing mini-golf and swimming in the pool. Sergeants and captains are people to train troops.” Max Manwaring, and Court Prisk, *El Salvador at War* (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1988), 331. This speaks also to the issue of whether senior ESAF colonels wanted advisers in their brigades at all.

¹⁶ Roach, e-mail, 11 April 2003.

¹⁷ Roach, e-mail, 11 April 2003.

¹⁸ Roach, e-mail, 11 April 2003. After the lieutenant colonels had been withdrawn from the brigades, the positions created for them were: 1st Brigade OPATT — Lieutenant Colonel Jim Roach, Special Forces, responsible for strategic site security, worked with the National Electric Company to improve defensive systems for the four major dams and power transmission lines. 2nd Brigade OPATT — Lieutenant Colonel Frank Gramer, Infantry, became the Coordinator of Assistance, later Civic Action Coordinator. 3rd Brigade OPATT — Lieutenant Colonel Les Smith, Infantry, became team chief for the newly established National Military Training Center at LaUnion (the only one who moved into a planned position). 4th Brigade OPATT — Lieutenant Colonel Gil Tjerina, Infantry, titled Hot Spot OPATT, tasked to observe and report on issues throughout the country. 5th Brigade OPATT — Lieutenant Colonel Al Adame, Military Police, first worked with the Maestranza, the major maintenance facility for the armed forces, and after the Zona Rosa incident, with the National Police. 6th Brigade OPATT — Lieutenant Colonel Miles Crafton, USMC, was named senior OPATT to supervise the remainder of the OPATT mission.

¹⁹ Roach, e-mail, 11 April 2003.

²⁰ Chris L. Lukasevich, “Training and Advisory Assistance to the Armed Forces of El Salvador from 1981-1991 and the Resulting Decline in Human Rights Abuses: The Role of U.S. Army Special Forces,” master's thesis, University of Arizona, 2002, 28, 29.

²¹ James S. Corum, “The Air War in El Salvador,” *Aerospace Power Journal*, Vol. XII, No. 2 (Summer 1998), 31-32.

²² Strict recognition of rank as a source of authority is common throughout Latin American militaries. It generally derives from rigid regulations governing promotion, assignment and other career-progression influences. El Salvador's military was generally regarded as stricter than most regarding rank. See Brian J. Bosch, *The Salvadoran Officer Corps and the Final Offensive of 1981* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Company, 1999), Chapter One, for a detailed

discussion of the ESAF officer corps.

²³ Mark A. Meoni, "The Adviser From Vietnam to El Salvador," master's thesis, University of Scranton, 1992, 59.

²⁴ Frank Pedrozo, interview with the author, 4 May 2003.

²⁵ Language skill is evaluated in reading and speaking levels.

²⁶ In 1989, the MILGP's Colonel Milton Menjivar wanted to replace all SF advisers with Airborne Ranger Infantry officers and Ranger Regiment NCOs, but few spoke Spanish, and the NCOs lacked the requisite O&I training. Kalev Sepp, e-mail to author, 7 August 2003.

²⁷ Memorandum for Director, Security Assistance Training Management Office, Fort Bragg, NC 28307-5000, Subject: Training Assistance Evaluation, El Salvador ETSS (OPATT), 14 June 1991.

²⁸ Memorandum for Director, Security Assistance Training Management Office, Fort Bragg, NC 28307-5000, Subject: Training Assistance Evaluation, El Salvador ETSS (OPATT), 24 April 1992.

²⁹ Christopher St. John, e-mail to the author, 20 May 2003.

³⁰ Hy Rothstein, e-mail to the author, 16 May 2003.

³¹ Gregory Banner, personal notes, 12 June 1991.

³² These policies were driven in large part by the Reagan administration's objective of avoiding triggering the 1973 War Powers Resolution, which requires the president to report to the Congress when deploying U.S. forces overseas into "hostilities" or "imminent hostilities" and gives the Congress the power to require the president the withdraw them. If forces sent to El Salvador were titled "trainers" and restricted from going on combat operations, they could arguably not be committed into hostilities, and therefore Congress could not compel the president to withdraw them.

³³ William R. Nealon, interview with the author, 15 May 2003.

³⁴ Some OPATTs report they favored talking to troops to get the facts about how operations went. After-action reports were not always formal written documents, rather they were more often a verbal report, normally from the officer leading the mission, who might be reluctant to report a poor performance. Soldiers, on the other hand, had little to protect or embellish. Nealon interview, 15 May 2003.

³⁵ Lukasevich, 23-26. Lukasevich argues that U.S. Army Special Forces "significantly and disproportionately" contributed to improved ESAF human-rights performance because of the continuous presence during training programs in that 10-year period. He uses data on

reported human-rights violations gathered by the U.N. Truth Commission.

³⁶ Manwaring and Prisk, 324-25. See also Nealon interview with Sepp, 15 June 1996.

³⁷ Nealon interview, 15 May 2003.

³⁸ Lukasevich, 21-24.

³⁹ For a summary of international conventions regarding human rights in conflicts and how they were applied to the situation in El Salvador, see Lukasevich, 29-33.

⁴⁰ Roach, e-mail to the author, 2 August 2003. Roach points out, "Unfortunately the Embassy and SOUTHCOM wanted to count hours of human-rights instruction presented to the Salvadoran military as a measure of effectiveness. Absolutely self-defeating. OPATT effectiveness was in spite of SOUTHCOM."

⁴¹ Nealon interview, 15 May 2003.

⁴² Nealon interview, 15 May 2003.

⁴³ ESAF use of "delinquent" and "terrorist" when referring to insurgents was an indicator of ESAF attitudes that resisted any notion of legitimacy for the FMLN. To the ESAF, they were criminals and terrorists rolled into one.

⁴⁴ William Strobel, e-mail to author, 14 April 2003.

⁴⁵ The U.N. Truth Commission was established to investigate human-rights violations at the end of the war. The data used for this study by Chris Lukasevich included human-rights violations reported and reasonably substantiated by the commission to have been committed by specific persons or units in the Salvadoran army.

⁴⁶ Lukasevich, 16, 17.

⁴⁷ The U.S. established a regional training center in Honduras in August 1983 to train ESAF units away from the distraction of operations that routinely took units out of training.

⁴⁸ Michael Childress, *Effectiveness of U.S. Training in Internal Defense and Development: The Cases of El Salvador and Honduras* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 1995) 38.

⁴⁹ Pedrozo interview, 4 May 2003.

⁵⁰ Ernest Evans, "El Salvador's Lessons for Future U.S. Interventions," *World Affairs* (Summer 1997); Waghelstein, "The El Salvador Case." See also Meoni and Lukasevich.

A Structural Analysis of the Ethnic Insurgency in Burma

by Major Larry J. Redmon

One of the main missions of United States Army Special Forces in unconventional warfare is to support insurgencies or to conduct counterinsurgency operations. Some of the most interesting insurgencies have taken place in Southeast Asia, with the ongoing insurgent movements in Burma serving as a perfect case study of the analysis of an insurgent movement.

The Burmese insurgency is a complex ethnic insurgency composed of as many as 14 different ethnic groups. While there is a fair amount of material available about some of the ethnic groups, such as the Karen, Kachin and Shan, other groups, such as the Naga, Arakan and Pao, have virtually nothing written or published about their struggle. Some of the groups fight with primitive weapons such as spears, bows and arrows; others, such as the Wa, use machine guns, mortars, artillery and even anti-aircraft artillery. Many of the groups

have thousands of guerrilla fighters and are well-organized militarily and politically; others are few in number and have little organization.

The various ethnic insurgent groups are struggling against the current government in Burma, better known as the State Peace and Development Council, or SPDC, which is a military dictatorship. Other than that struggle, the ethnic groups have little in common. Each of the groups appears to have its own objectives.¹

Many of the insurgent groups, such as the Karen National Union, or KNU, and the National League for Democracy, or NLD, led by the Noble laureate Aung San Suu Kyi,⁴ are fighting for a revolution to replace the current government with a federalized democracy. Others, namely the Shan, are fighting a civil war for secession and independence. The other insurgent groups fall somewhere between revolution and civil war.

Two groups continue to influence the situation in Burma even though they are for all intents and purposes now defunct — the Communist Party of Burma, or CPB, and the National Chinese Army, or the Kuomintang, or KMT.

The Maoist-inspired CPB lasted from 1939 to 1989. At one time the

most serious challenge to the government, the CPB was never able to build a united front or to take its war beyond the countryside. By the end of the 1970s, the CPB had ceased to be a serious threat because they lost China's military cooperation and support.⁵ The CPB had disbanded altogether by 1989, although its influence is still felt in the UWSA and among the Shan resistance.

The CPB's rank and file (mainly ethnic Wa, with some Shan) and its ethnic Chinese leadership either surrendered to the government, disappeared, moved to China or, in the case of the Shan, became the Mong Tai Army. The Wa reorganized as the United Wa State Army, or UWSA, fielding a force composed of primarily ethnic Wa.

At the end of World War II, the KMT was still operating in Northern Thailand, Burma and Southern China. Though similar in appearance to insurgent groups and often assisting them, it was never really more than a lost army used by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency to spy on China and for other anticommunist activities during the Cold War. The KMT, led by the warlord General Li Wenhuan, dealt in narcotics⁶ and often brutalized the people and the area it occupied. The KMT's presence

Opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the policies or views of the U.S. Army, the Department of Defense or the U.S. government. — Editor

in the Shan States prompted the Burmese Army to move in and occupy the Shan States, sparking the fire of Shan nationalism. The KMT ceased to exist when its last remnants were airlifted to Taiwan in 1954.⁷

Revolution or civil war?

In his 1990 publication, *Insurgency and Terrorism: Inside Modern Revolutionary Warfare*, Bard E. O'Neill describes seven types of insurgencies: *anarchist, egalitarian, traditionalist, pluralist, secessionist, reformist and preservationist*. The first four types are revolutionary, because they seek to completely change an existing political system. All seven types are different, but they have one factor in common: They dispute the legitimacy of the ruling power. Although O'Neill probably intended that only one insurgency type would apply to each conflict, the insurgencies in Burma contain three types: *pluralist, secessionist and reformist*.

The KNU is making revolution through a *pluralist* insurgency. *Pluralist* insurgents seek a revolutionary transformation of the political system.⁸ We normally think of revolution as being communist-inspired, but insurgents who are not communists also carry out revolutions. The KNU rejects current government policies and advocates a complete overthrow of the regime. Its goal is to establish a system that emphasizes individual freedom, liberty and compromise. The KNU does not desire to separate itself from the union. It wants to live in a *Kawthoolei*, or a *separate Karen state*, with some measure of autonomy under a federalized democracy.

The roots of the Karen insurgency reach back to the granting of Burma's independence in 1948. The Karen were once part of the Burmese British Army, making up the 1st and 2nd Karen Rifles and the partial



units of the 3rd Karen Rifles. When the Burma government failed to address Karen grievances of a Karen massacre by the Burma Independence Army during World War II, as well as the Karens' desire for a Karen homeland, Karen units defected to the hills and formed the Karen Defense Organization, or KNDO.²

In the early years of their struggle, the Karens rejected the government because it didn't address their demands for a *Kawthoolei* or for representation in the Burmese democracy. Because they demanded their own independent *Kawthoolei* separate

from Burma, they were *secessionists*. Later, when they saw attempts at democratic reform, the Karens pushed for inclusion in the union, with reforms in the government — thus making them *reformists*.

The Karen movement might still also be seen as a *reformist* insurgency. In a *reformist* insurgency, the insurgents demand autonomy and are primarily concerned with the existing allocations of political and material resources, which they consider discriminatory and illegitimate.

The Restoration Council of the Shan State, or RCSS, on the other

hand, *is* fighting a *secessionist* insurgency. The Shan have at times been *pluralist*, willing to accept autonomy under a federalized system. In fact, the Shan were signatories to the 1997 *Mae Thaw Ra* agreement, in which ethnic delegates representing the various insurgent groups agreed to a federalized union. But on May 27, 2000, the Shan changed their stand to one of seeking full independence.¹⁰

The Shan insurgency began during the late 1950s. In the 1947 constitution, there was a provision for the Shan to secede if after 10 years they were not happy with the union. As the end of the 10 years approached, the Shan, feeling that they were not properly represented in the union and that there was inadequate government protection from KMT forces in the Shan State, and even worse, fearing an occupation of the Shan State by Burmese government forces, made it known that they were going to exercise their constitutional right to secede.

The Shan have gone to great lengths to explain their position on secession, citing their right to secession under the 1947 Constitution, the historical recognition even by the British of their hereditary rulers and autonomous regions as proof that they never really were part of the union. The Shan feel that they have no choice but to expel outsiders from the Shan State and preserve their peoples in the form of an independent state.

Ideology

Although ideology does not play as predominant a role as in the Iranian revolution or in Communist China, it does play a role among the ethnic insurgent groups and within the Burmese government. Ideology has not developed into a unifying factor that rallies the masses across the board or motivates mass defections

or sympathy among the military. There has been no single ideology that would help the groups to form the united front they need in order to take the war to Rangoon. What seem to be the common ideologies are: communism, religion, democracy and ethnic rights.

Communism

When we think of insurgent ideology, communism usually comes to mind. Communist ideology was a motivating factor for the CPB and its Maoist-inspired attempt at revolution. The CPB's longevity and successes led the Karen, the Shan and to a lesser extent, the Kachin, Pao and others, to re-examine their strategies. The works of Mao Zedong were translated into Burman, and they were widely read and followed by most ethnic insurgent groups. Even today, some groups, namely the Shan and the Wa, still follow Mao's strategy, but they have pushed his communist ideology aside.

For a time, communist ideology was a unifying factor for a short-lived military alliance between the CPB and the KNU. The alliance was successful in combating the *Tatmadaw*, or Burmese Army, but the groups were too diverse in their goals and their religious beliefs to follow Mao.¹¹ Communist ideology caused serious, sometimes violent, factionalism between the KNU's Karens and Kachins, however, for a time the ideology had an impact among the Buddhist ethnic groups, because its principles seemed at first to go hand in hand with Buddhist views of materialism.¹² Today the SPDC no longer faces any real threat from any communist-inspired insurgents.

Religion

Religion has neither unified the insurgent groups nor rallied support for either the government or the insurgents. But while a particular

religion is not a goal of the insurgents, religion has been used as an ideological factor by the SPDC for unifying opposition to the various non-Buddhist insurgent groups. Former Prime Minister U Nu (1948-56, 1957-58, 1960-62) made great attempts to instill Buddhism as the state religion.¹³ Some leaders of the SPDC claim that Buddhism is the only religion for Burma and attack Christianity and Islam with claims that the insurgents discriminate against and persecute Buddhist hill tribes.

The attempt to make Buddhism the state religion fueled the insurgency. While the ethnic insurgents never included religion as a strong reason for rebellion, the improper use of religious ideology by the government has led the insurgents to mistrust the government even more. Christians, especially among the Kachin and Karen, have become wary of the largely Buddhist, mostly Burman military. Indeed, *Tatmadaw* attacks and abuses are often directed against Christian hill tribes, ministers and churches. Similar attacks have been reported among the various Muslim insurgents along the borders with India and Bangladesh.¹⁴

Although the Shan are mostly Buddhists, that doesn't keep the *Tatmadaw* from attacking them, as well. In fact, the past few years have seen some of the fiercest fighting between the Shan State Army, or SSA, and the *Tatmadaw*. The Shan's Buddhist culture and ethnic ties to the Thai people engendered limited sympathy and support from the Thai military.

The government has had some success using religion to split the insurgent factions. The Buddhist-dominated Democratic Karen Buddhist Army, or DKBA, is one of the most feared and ruthless groups operating alongside *Tatmadaw* troops against the Karen who support the KNU and KNLA. The DKBA once made up a battalion from the KNLA's 7th Brigade. In 1995, the battalion com-

mander made a secret deal with *Tatmadaw* commanders that allowed his entire unit to continue to operate and keep their weapons as long as they assisted the *Tatmadaw* in fighting the ethnic insurgents. The DKBA's knowledge of the Karen areas and operations has allowed its members to move quite easily among the Karen, attacking villages and KNLA units. The DKBA is also reputedly heavily involved with methamphetamine trafficking for the *Tatmadaw*. There are on-going battles between the DKBA and the KNLA very near the Thai border, and at times they spill over into nearby Thailand.

It should be noted that among the ethnic insurgent groups themselves, there are religious subgroups, and misunderstandings between them cause splits. The DKBA split from the KNLA resulted partially because of misunderstandings and perceived inattention from the Christian-led KNU. KNU officials have told the author that they at times have a communication problem with the Buddhist Karen, and that they need to do a better job of understanding them and giving them equal representation within the political and military framework of the KNU and KNLA.¹⁶

In cases in which the SPDC has successfully used religion to split insurgent groups, their success has been coupled with lucrative rewards for corrupt leaders. The real reasons that insurgent groups split, especially in the case of the DKBA and KNLA, are: fatigue and depression among various insurgent groups; offers of lucrative business concessions, amnesty and power by the *Tatmadaw*; real inequities faced by some Buddhist officers among the KNU and KNLA; the perception that Christian officers get better tax opportunities and promotions; and the inability of the KNU leadership to correct the problems and inequities listed above. Insurgent



Photo from the collection of Larry Redmon

A Burmese family flees into the jungle to escape the Burmese Army.

leaders who are dedicated to their cause are not easily swayed by the SPDC, but those who are fighting for power and rewards find it difficult to carry on their fight.

Democracy, ethnic rights

Democracy and ethnic rights are the real ideological factors at work in Burma's insurgency. Burmese society is made up of so many different ethnic groups that it is a wonder the state could ever have been self-governing. Ethnic rights were a serious problem during British rule, and the British often sent troops into the hinterlands to quell rebellion, which they often did brutally.

The British administration in Burma, however, was able to control the widespread discontent by creating roles for some ethnic groups and by allowing others, such as the Shan, a measure of autonomy.¹⁷ The British used the Karen and Kachin as soldiers, and many of them became officers and policeman, the most famous being General Smith Dunn, a Karen officer who served in the British Burmese Army and

fought behind Japanese lines.¹⁸

Ethnic rights were partially, though inadequately, addressed in the 1947 constitution, which granted the Shan State the right to secession after 10 years but did not address the Karen state homeland at all.¹⁹ Karen leaders, including General Smith Dunn, discussed the dream of the Karen people for a *Kawthoolei* with Aung San, who led Burma to its independence from Britain but was later assassinated. Aung San convinced the Karens that not until a constitution had been signed, and then only through normal parliamentary proceedings, could the *Kawthoolei* state be realized.²⁰ It never was.

After the KMT had been expelled from the Shan State in 1954, the *Tatmadaw* remained, and the Shan viewed its presence as an occupation of their sovereign state. The *Tatmadaw* proved to be in many ways worse than the KMT, and it quickly became the object of attacks by small armed units — the forerunners of the SSA — under Sao Noi, who with only 31 men and 17 weapons formed the *Noom Serk Harn* (young warriors) on May 21, 1958. The small group was



Photo from the collection of Larry Hedmon

A Burmese family displaced by the Burmese government's four-cuts policy.

the beginning of the Shan insurgency that has lasted until today under a variety of names.

All the ethnic groups in Burma want an equal voice in a government that they have seen become increasingly controlled by Burmans.²¹ All groups want to retain their identities, culture, language and historic homelands. It is this quest for their rights and for the preservation of their ethnicity that has led to open rebellion. The rallying cry for the NLD is democracy and ethnic rights, and the two must be paired together, for without democracy there can be no ethnic rights.

External support

If insurgents are to combat government military forces effectively, they must have external support. In most cases, a lack of external support will lead to the insurgents' demise.

At one time or another, almost all the ethnic insurgents have received some external moral support from foreign governments, such as Thailand; nongovernmental organizations; the United Nations, the European Union or religious groups. Moral support is most often given to the

NLD and Aung San Suu Kyi; indeed, the presentation of the 1991 Noble Peace Prize to Suu Kyi was a huge morale boost to the NLD's struggle against the SPDC. Likewise, the opportunity for the Karen leadership to testify in front of a human-rights caucus in the U.S. Congress in October 2000, and subsequent wording in support of the Karen in the *Congressional Review*, was a show of moral support for the Karen insurgents.²²

But moral support doesn't win battles; it must lead to political support, of which the insurgents have little. If there were true political support, the international community would recognize Suu Kyi and her NLD as the rightful democratically elected government of Burma, not the military dictatorship. In 1988, the NLD won an overwhelming victory in the national elections, but the military nullified the election.

It has been through material support from Thailand, especially the granting of sanctuary, that the insurgents have been able to continue their struggle. The Thailand-Burma border is an extremely remote area with thick jungles and mountainous terrain. The area is

perfect for insurgent activity and for guerrilla operations. Until 2002, Thailand allowed the insurgent groups to maintain bases and strongholds within Thailand. Many times, the *Tatmadaw*, in pursuit of Karen or Shan troops, has received Thai artillery fire upon reaching the border, while the insurgents fled safely inside Thailand. Thai support even included joint operations with the insurgents against *Tatmadaw* forces.

The granting of sanctuary also led to great amounts of material support. Through the sanctuary of Thailand, the insurgents could obtain weapons, ammunition, food, clothing, medicines and other types of material support on the open market or the black market. They could even receive military training and education. The leadership likewise was allowed to live in relative safety in Thailand and even to travel freely in the country.

The SPDC for years accused Thailand of supporting the resistance movement, and it went so far as to give Thailand lists of insurgents and Thai army commanders that the SPDC saw as threats to national security. Recently, under the government of Prime Minister Thaksin, Thailand, seemingly in a policy of appeasement to the SPDC, removed or transferred several Thai army special forces officers who supported the insurgents, as well as a widely respected former commander in chief of the Royal Thai Army.

Thailand has also established a policy that it will not interfere in the internal affairs of Burma and that it will no longer allow insurgents to attack Burmese forces or to use Thailand as sanctuary.²³ Under the new policy, the Thai government is forcing insurgents and their families back inside Burma to face the government forces.²⁴ The denial of sanctuary has put the insurgents in

an almost impossible position.

There are two important components of the environment of an insurgency. The first component is the physical environment — the terrain, climate and lines of communication. The second component, and in Burma's case, the most important, is the human environment — the people, and in this case, the ethnic insurgents. Both components are crucial to a complete understanding of the complexity of the insurgency.

Physical environment

The physical environment of Burma is clearly a contributing factor to the insurgency's longevity of more than 50 years. Almost all of the insurgent groups are located along the borders of Thailand, China, India and Bangladesh. The strongest, the Karen and the Shan, are located along the Thai border, and the Wa are located along the Chinese and Thai borders. All these border areas are remote locations that are inaccessible to government troops, yet they provide the insurgents with protective bases and access to sanctuary and to popular support.

The Karen and the Shan have greatly benefited from their proximity to the Thai border, getting support from Thai military commanders and units, having access to markets inside Thailand and even receiving revenue from taxing goods crossing the border from insurgent-controlled areas.

The Wa have benefited from their proximity to the Chinese border, receiving material assistance and training from the Chinese communists. The closeness of the Wa to China is crucial to survival of the UWSA. The Naga and Kachin also benefited in similar ways from their proximity to India, Bangladesh and China, but they receive little in the way of either passive or official support from any of those nations. In

fact, the Burmese government has had the cooperation of those countries, especially China, in suppressing the Naga and Kachins.

The rugged terrain of Burma's jungle regions is conducive to sustaining the insurgent groups, offering cover and concealment for their guerrilla activities. The terrain also makes it difficult for government forces to exploit their advantages in equipment and transportation. Vehicular movement, especially by armor, is extremely difficult at best, resulting in the *Tatmadaw* having to fight essentially on the same level as the insurgents. The advantage normally goes to the insurgents, who are fighting on familiar terrain.

The human environment

The human environment is one of the most misunderstood dimensions of the ethnic insurgency in Burma. Indeed, misunderstanding of the complexity of the human environment has led to divisions among tribes of the same race that are of different religions, such as the Buddhist Karen and Christian Karen.

It has led to the breaching of insurgent alliances — alliances that had

large successes against government forces. The leadership of the SPDC is keenly aware of the human environment, and its efforts to homogenize all aspects of Burmese society are an effort to erase cultural differences even at the expense of killing Burma's ethnic peoples.

Myriad differences in race, culture and religion make it difficult for the insurgents to unify either in a military or political alliance or even to agree on an overall strategy for supporting pro-democracy movements within Burma. The best known of these movements, the NLD, while it seems to support the ethnic rights of all people of Burma and has the support of many of the ethnic groups, is not representative of the ethnic minorities or insurgents. Suu Kyi, the vocal leader of the NLD, is Buddhist and western-educated, while many of the ethnic groups are not Buddhist and not western educated.

One aspect of the human environment that deserves further study in the Burma insurgency is the political structure. In *The Civic Culture*, Gabriel A. Almond characterizes people in terms of their awareness of the political process and categorizes



Photo from the collection of Larry Redmon

Members of the Shan State Army undergo training at an insurgent camp in Burma.

them as one of three types of actors: *parochials*, *subjects* or *participants*.

According to Almond, “The *parochials* are those citizens who have little or no awareness of the political system at the national level and no perception of their ability to influence it.”²⁶ The *parochials* are generally illiterate, live in poverty, isolated, and their condition keeps them passive and indifferent. This can be seen among the oppressed ethnic hill tribes and rural people, who even though they are oppressed, for the most part take no action, preferring to be left alone.

Likewise, the city dwellers who take no action despite being constantly watched; being denied jobs, fair pay and medical treatment; and being subject to arrest, intimidation and harassment, are also *parochial*. It seems that the SPDC is content to keep everyone except for a few elite in this category.

The *subjects* are the citizens who are aware of the impact of the political system on their lives but who are not active in shaping policy or in making the government. The *subjects* aren’t normally inclined to join insurgent

forces. Unless they have personally been subjected to the torture or brutality of the regime, it will take great coercion by the insurgents to get them to join the movement.²⁷ The *subjects* are the people the SPDC takes great efforts to intimidate through harassment, imprisonment or terror.

The *participants* are the group to which the insurgents want to belong. “*Participants* are generally educated citizens who are not only aware of national political institutions and policies but are also cognizant of the political process and wish to actively engage it.”²⁸

The *participants* generally offer the best potential for insurgent recruitment, especially when government becomes authoritarian and excludes many of them from the process. This group is small in Burma because its members have been imprisoned, put under close scrutiny or intimidated to the point of submission; or have become dissidents abroad or killed for their beliefs.

Training and professionalism

The professionalism and quality of the insurgent groups varies consider-

ably. Insurgent armies that were once part of the British Burmese Army, namely the Karen, and others who had experience from the war fighting alongside the American OSS had a considerable amount of combat experience. Many of their leaders had been officers and NCOs, and they became well-trained guerrilla fighters. The CPB was trained and equipped by the Chinese People’s Liberation Army, or PLA, and the CPB’s guerrilla forces and political cadre received extensive training in China. Once the CPB was defeated, many of its rank and file joined the Shan insurgents and the UWSA.³¹

Insurgent groups also received training and assistance from the KMT. The KMT commanded large amounts of weapons, cash and considerable power and at times provided assistance to and formed alliances with the Karen and the Shan. Thailand has also provided support to the Karen and Shan, as well as to other groups operating along the Burma-Thailand border, using them as a proxy force to keep regular Burmese troops off the border or to assist in Thailand’s drug war with the Burmese and the UWSA.

The largest insurgent group, the UWSA, is trained and led predominantly by ethnic Chinese. The Wa are a primitive people, and it wasn’t until the 1970s that they abolished the age-old practice of head-hunting. The troops of the UWSA are Northern Wa or Chinese Wa, with some Southern Wa and Wa from the Shan State. The UWSA has a cease-fire agreement with the SPDC and the *Tatmadaw*³² that allows them to control their own areas, to continue to grow opium and to produce amphetamines. In return, they cooperate with the *Tatmadaw* in its fight against the other insurgents, now almost exclusively the Shan. Still, the UWSA is no friend of the SPDC and is not overly anxious to do its bidding, and it makes great efforts to avoid battle with the Shan.



Photo from the collection of Larry Redmon

Karen insurgents discuss strategy prior to going on patrol. The insurgents often patrol in an effort to help displaced families who are fleeing the Burmese Army.

Members of the UWSA receive military training within their own ranks, but there are rumors that they are still trained by PLA troops in China. It should also be pointed out that the UWSA is no more than an army controlled by an ethnic Chinese warlord who is only after profit and power. The UWSA does demand an autonomous region in the Eastern Shan State. It claims to want to turn away from drug-trafficking, but its alliance with the SPDC proves otherwise. As one Wa official told a missionary friend of the author's, "The Wa are for the Wa."³³

Organization

The Burmese insurgents are some of the best-organized insurgents in the world. Most have home pages on the Internet, many, mainly the Karen, the Shan and the Kachin, have delegates in the U.S. and England. The Karen and Kachin began their insurgency with an organization already intact. The Shan had a standing tradition of limited autonomy, but they had no real armed forces. The Wa have Chinese-communist influence within their military structure. That Chinese legacy also carries over into the Shan.

Politically, the NLD, nationally led from Rangoon, has taken the lead in the Burmese resistance. Kyi leads but one pro-democracy group, and she doesn't command the ethnic insurgents in any unifying action or structure. The ethnic insurgents are not politically led by any of the groups in Rangoon but rather from their guerrilla bases or from what sanctuary is left in Thailand. All ethnic insurgent groups except the Wa signed the *Mae Raw Tha* Agreement in 1997, supporting the NLD and the formation of a federal democracy.³⁴ While the ethnic insurgents groups support Suu Kyi in principle, they still have some suspicion about whether she will

fully embrace ethnic rights, as she is Burman herself.

The Karen are nominally organized under the KNU. An elected member chairs the political arm, and the KNU holds biannual congresses to choose new delegates and to make policy. The KNLA and KNDO fall under the military command of the KNU. Members from the military arms can be either elected or standing members of the KNU. The KNLA and KNDO are broken down along traditional British military lines of districts, brigades, battalions and companies. Most of these units are ethnic Karen, but they also contain whole or partial units of other ethnic groups who have formed part of the KNLA, such as the Kayan, Karenni and even some Burman.

The Shan State is organized under the RCSS, a coalition of the various military and political arms in the Shan State. The aim of the RCSS "is to restore unity, independence, democracy and peace to the Shan people in Shan State. It is a wartime council responsible for the administration, military and political affairs of the Shan State."³⁵ The RCSS was formed mainly from the combination of the SSA and an executive committee from the RCSS, and in 1999 it became known simply as the RCSS. What is important in analyzing political arms is the publications of doctrine or policies among and within the ethnic groups. As an example, in its declaration of goals and objectives, the RCSS clearly states that all military arms of its organization, i.e., the SSA and others, are under the control and guidance of the political leadership of the RCSS.

Leadership

The leadership of the insurgent groups must be understood in order to distinguish whether the group is a true insurgent organization. For example, Khun Sa led an army

known at times as the Shan State Army. In the beginning, Khun Sa sounded and acted like an insurgent, and in all fairness, he most likely was. Later, however, he became a warlord out for his own interests, and he eventually betrayed his people for the safety of Rangoon and the personal use of his drug profits. Khun Sa was looking for power and profit, and he had no real aspirations of leading his people to freedom. If he did, his aspirations were easily overcome by the lucrative concessions made by the SPDC and the life of luxury that he now lives. Similarly, the KMT was never an insurgent organization but was led by an increasingly powerful general who controlled the drug trade, became part of a criminal organization and turned into a warlord out for profit.

The insurgent leaders are well-educated men who have ideals and vision. They are not simple peasants, although most have known extreme hardships, and some even came from a peasant life. The ethnic insurgents are poor, hill-tribe peoples who endure primitive living conditions, but their leadership, both military and political, is made up of lawyers, teachers, doctors, professional soldiers, former policemen, engineers, monks and pastors and even university students. General Bo Mya of the Karen National Union, or KNU, and the Karen National Liberation Army, or KNLA, was once a member of the Karen Constabulary under the British administration and later fought behind Japanese lines.³⁷ He has been the cornerstone of the Karen since the struggle for freedom and recognition began.

Likewise, Brigadier General Isaac Po of the KNLA and Colonel Htoo Htoo Lay of the Karen National Defense Organizational, or KNDO, and the KNU, are university-educated men, the formerly an engineer who fled to the resistance after the 1972 crackdown, and the latter for-

merly a Karen lawyer and state prosecutor from Rangoon. Colonel Yod Suek, the leader of the SSA, rose up through the ranks of the Mong Tai Army, split with Khun Sa, and later formed the SSA. Yod Suek has a clear vision for his people and has united the Shan people under the leadership of the RCSS.³⁸

The insurgents are also led by people who have never ventured beyond the insurgent-controlled areas, but even those people, while somewhat primitive, are nonetheless educated, motivated and dedicated to their cause. The insurgents know the value of education to preserving their language, their culture and their way of life. The Karen and Shan have extensive education programs, within the limitations of their refugee camps. The author has witnessed education in progress at a large Karen refugee camp inside the Thai border north of Mae Sot, Thailand. While the camp was primitive, it was apparent that, within their meager means, the Karens had made every possible effort to provide the best education for their children. The education process is a result of educated leaders who realize that through education they can change their destiny, maintain their identity, culture and language, and continue their struggle for freedom.

Often wrongly accused of being drug armies, the insurgent groups are led by real leaders. The leaders aren't driving luxury cars or living in luxurious houses like the drug lords in South America; they share the burdens and hardships of their people. Most importantly, they share their people's values, ideals and vision for democracy and freedom.

Strategic approach

In his book, *Insurgency and Terrorism: Inside Modern Revolutionary Warfare*, Bard E. O'Neill lists four broad strategic approaches to insurgency — conspiratorial strategy, pro-

tracted popular war strategy, military-focus strategy and urban-warfare strategy. The second of these is the most evident among the Burma insurgents.

Students of revolutionary warfare will undoubtedly be familiar with the protracted popular war strategy — the strategy envisioned by Mao Zedong. According to O'Neill, "The strategy of a protracted popular war articulated by Mao is undoubtedly the most conceptually elaborate and perhaps the most widely copied insurgent strategy."³⁹ The Maoist-inspired CPB fought this strategy, and the Shan, the Karen and other groups read translations of Mao's works and adjusted their strategies to the protracted popular war, as they believed that it was the best method for defeating the SPDC and bringing peace and democracy to Burma. The Karen and Shan leaders fully understand Mao's strategy and have described to the author Mao's three phases as they relate to their struggle.

The Karen clearly understand that the first phase, the *strategic defensive*, is a time when the enemy is on the offensive. It was the period during which the KNU, KNLA and SSA concentrated on survival, political organization and low-level violence. They see this phase beginning when the first Karen units defected from the Burma Army in the late 1940s and began organizing their insurgency in the mountains of Burma. In the beginning, they believed they would win by superior military tactics and political pressure on the leaders of the Burma government. Their organization began with a few battalions, multiplied into a well-organized guerrilla force consisting of several brigades, and became a large political and military structure overseeing what has become essentially a government in exile. As they retreated into the hinterland and mountains, the insurgents fought a pro-

tracted war of retreat, not yet total guerrilla warfare, mostly along conventional lines with maneuver and unit-to-unit engagements.

The second phase, the *strategic stalemate*, is characterized by guerrilla warfare. This is the insurgency's current state of affairs. The insurgents have been primarily concerned with retaining their territory, and, in the past, have commanded most areas outside of Rangoon. The fall of Mannerplaw to the *Tatmadaw* in 1995 was the beginning of the end of large Karen-controlled areas. Now the insurgents control few areas. One exception may be the UWSA, who, by virtue of a cease-fire with the SPDC, have retained control of their territory.

During the second phase, the guerrillas are supposed to begin an escalation of military action and victories. Those victories are supposed to lead to "demoralization, lethargy and defections on the government side that ushers in the strategic offensive phase."⁴⁰ During the third phase, the *strategic offensive*, the insurgents are supposed to move from guerrilla warfare to mobile conventional tactics on a large scale, and the political and psychological effects of the insurgent victories are supposed to lead to collapse of the government.⁴¹

Unfortunately, the strategic offensive phase has largely eluded the insurgents. It is true that the insurgents have fought battles during which they were organized along conventional lines. The Karen and the Wa forces have faced the *Tatmadaw* head-on in maneuver and artillery duels. The insurgents have so far failed to destroy the government forces, which is the principal military objective of the third phase, and they have failed to displace the government authority, which is the principal political objective. The last time they were even close to achieving the political objective was during the 1990 elections, when the NLD won a

majority of seats in the government. During the subsequent crackdown by the SPDC, the insurgent groups lacked unity, took no military action and lost the chance to exploit the situation to their favor.

It is important to point out that in Mao's theory, victory can come during any phase; it isn't necessary to progress through all the phases. The insurgent leadership needs to be able to recognize the stage it is in and be flexible enough to revert to a previous stage, if necessary. This element of flexibility is what makes Mao's protracted popular war strategy so successful.

Overall, the strategy of a protracted popular war has allowed the various ethnic insurgents to carry on their struggle. But protracted popular war depends on extreme popular support and on the creation of extensive political and military organizations. The insurgents have achieved popular support, but large portions of that support have been passive. While the insurgents can obtain recruits and supplies in remote areas under their control, they haven't been successful at turning large-scale popular support into action and open rebellion.

The insurgents have been successful at organization among their own groups, but they have not been successful bringing the various groups together to form a united front. The insurgents have signed agreements of cooperation with each other and with the NLD, but those agreements have not developed into true cooperation that would unify their insurgency.

The insurgents have been somewhat successful at retaining control of the countryside, but the countryside is not where the SPDC gains its power. As long as the insurgents keep to the remote areas, they play into the hands of the SPDC, which will continue to isolate them and wear them down — a classic form of



Photo from the collection of Larry Redmon

A displaced Burmese villager hides in the mountainous region near the border.

counterinsurgency. Under the current situation, the successful use of Mao's strategy will be difficult at best. The insurgents do not have extensive external support; they are isolated in remote mountainous areas that are mostly inaccessible to any outside assistance; they are increasingly denied sanctuary; and they face an increasingly better-organized and more mobile army that is growing in size.

Government response

During a COIN campaign, a government should use all of its elements of national power — economic, political, military and informational — to defeat the insurgency. The government must possess a unity of effort between its civilian and military organizations. Its use of violence in quelling the insurgency must be impartial and proportionate. The government must be responsive to the needs of the people, taking care of their economic well-being, respecting cultural differences, and allowing public participation in government, especially when insurgent forces are accusing the government of being unresponsive in those areas.

But there is always the possibility that the government will simply conduct COIN through intimidation, imprisonment of dissidents, repression, murder, torture and even genocide. This is the case in Burma. While the SPDC practices some of fundamental elements of COIN, it is not trying to answer the needs of the people or to alleviate the grievances of the insurgents but rather to maintain its grip on power.

The SPDC's use of violence is effective because it is brutal, heavy-handed and applied almost immediately at any sign of dissent. During the 1988 student uprising against the government, hundreds were killed in the streets, people were imprisoned never to be seen again, and others were brutally tortured. Similar methods are taken against innocent villagers in rural areas who are suspected of supporting insurgents.

The people of Burma are among the poorest in Asia, but the SPDC is not responsive to the needs of the people, whether they are Burman or members of ethnic minorities. Except for an elite few, such as government officials and military officers, Burma's citizens are denied proper health care and education, fair wages

and good economic conditions are elusive, and the flow of information is controlled by the government propaganda agency. In conducting COIN, the Burmese government has relied on primarily four methods: the formation of militia units; the concept of divide and rule; the four-cuts policy; and the use of terror.

From 1963 to 1973, the Burmese government tried to gain the support of the smaller ethnic insurgent groups by giving them limited autonomy and amnesty in return for signing a cease-fire agreement. Once the agreement was signed, the military would form the groups into militia organizations that would cooperate with government forces and support the *Tatmadaw* in counterinsurgency operations against other insurgents. These militia units became known as the *Ka Kwe Ye*, or KKY. At first, the program was successful; many smaller groups signed the cease-fire agreements, allowing government troops to concentrate their efforts elsewhere.

Problems arose later when KKY units became uncontrollable and were involved in banditry, warlordism and drugs. The government was forced to abandon its KKY program in 1973, but it has recently renewed the practice of signing cease-fires with ethnic groups and giving them the same rights and responsibilities as under the old KKY program.

The largest group to sign a cease-fire is the UWSA, and its cooperation with the SPDC continues.⁴² If one were to believe *The New Light of Myanmar*, the official publication of the Burmese government, the government has already signed cease-fire agreements with 15 groups, but that number can be misleading. The SPDC lists the Kachin Independence Organization, or KIO, as a cease-fire signer, but in reality, the entire KIO did not sign, and many of its members are still in armed opposition to the government. The government also lists the SSA as a signer, but the SSA is still in armed struggle against the SPDC.

The divide-and-rule concept and the four-cuts concept were originally developed by the British, namely Sir Robert Thompson, in order to fight the communists in Malaysia.

The divide-and-rule concept is being applied to split the ethnic insurgents among themselves by appealing to their corrupt leaders, by playing on the superstitions of the ethnic minorities and by splitting Buddhist groups from non-Buddhist groups. The case of the split of the DKBA from the KNLA is an example: The SPDC played on religious differences between the Buddhist and non-Buddhist Karen units and coerced the corrupt Buddhist Karen leader into splitting from the KNLA and signing a cease-fire with the government. Likewise, the relocation of the Wa into the Shan State and the subsequent removal of Shan villagers to other locations split the Shan people into various localities and groups and caused tension between the Shan and Wa.

Divide-and-rule tactics also are used to separate ethnic people from the insurgents in order to prevent the insurgents from maintaining their support bases and their sources of recruitment. It is a classic COIN tactic, but what is supposed to happen is that the separated peoples are taken care of by the government, which tends to their basic needs and proves to them that the cause of the insurgents is wrong. Instead, in the case of the SDPC, the government has violated the human rights of the people.

The four cuts policy began in earnest in Burma during the 1970s. It was the policy initiated by General Ne Win to establish a security cordon around the central plains and to deny the insurgents their four main links with their families and local villagers: food, funds, intelligence and recruits. Burmese generals have denied the existence of the four-cuts policy, but it is well-documented, and recently many generals, including



Photo from the collection of Larry Redmon

Insurgent medical personnel work on an soldier who has been wounded in a confrontation between insurgent "rangers" and government forces. The insurgency is strengthened when the people feel that the government is not meeting their basic needs, such as the need for health care.

the ex-defense minister, General Tin Oo, and Brigadier General San Yu, longtime deputy of Ne Win, have spoken openly about the policy.⁴³

The four-cuts policy begins with ordering the entire population of all villages within a 40-50 km area to relocate to a government-controlled area in the plains. Villagers remaining behind are considered to be rebels or rebel supporters, and they are shot.

Often soldiers surround the relocated villagers, and their new village essentially becomes the center of a military compound. The soldiers then force the villagers to become sentries, lookouts and porters. Villagers are trained and put into the ranks as privates, leaving them no choice but to defend themselves against the insurgents and thus fight their own people. It is not unusual for insurgents to fight *Tatmadaw* troops who are of their own ethnic group. Although the tactic is simple, it is successful.

Terror is an ongoing element in the conflict in Burma, however, the ethnic insurgents openly state that terror serves them no purpose; in fact, the KNU has an official policy renouncing terrorist tactics.⁴⁴

There are many definitions of terrorism, especially in light of the advent of the al-Qaeda network. The FBI defines terrorism as “the unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives.”⁴⁵ The U.S. Army defines terrorism as “the unlawful use of or threatened use of force or violence against individuals or property to coerce or intimidate governments or societies to achieve political, religious or ideological objectives.”⁴⁶

These definitions don't well define what terrorism is or who a terrorist can be. What if a government undertakes that violence? What if that violence is undertaken by a military dictator? What if that violence is

undertaken by a group that is opposing a government led by a military dictator who uses brutal force to quell discontent and practices human-rights abuses? The FBI's definition seems to imply that using force against a civilian population might be considered terrorism, even if a government does it. The U.S. Army's definition seems more ambiguous.

O'Neill best defines terrorism in *Insurgency and Terrorism*: “Terrorism is a form of warfare in which violence is directed primarily against non-combatants, (usually unarmed civilians) rather than operational military and police forces, or economic assets (public and private).”⁴⁷ This definition closely describes what the *Tatmadaw* is trying to achieve under the banner of so-called national unity in Burma.

If we accept the FBI's and the U.S. Army's definitions of terrorism in regard to groups opposing governments, then it appears that what the ethnic insurgents are doing fits the definition of terrorism. But those definitions are meant to apply to violent activities taken against legitimate governments, not against governments that take violent actions against their own people.

The SPDC would like the rest of the world to believe that the ethnic insurgents are terrorists. One has only to look at the *New Light of Myanmar*, on any given day, to see articles filled with rhetoric calling the insurgents terrorists. The SPDC tries to spread its propaganda by highlighting so-called terrorist acts by the insurgents, but upon close examination, those acts are merely battles between government troops and guerrillas, or between government troops and their cease-fire groups. The bombings in May 2003 in Taichlek, Burma, at first attributed to Shan terrorists, are now widely believed to have been the work of Wa drug lords upset over their deals with local *Tatmadaw* commanders.

There have been suggestions that General Bo Mya of the KNU practiced terror against those who betrayed the cause of the KNU and KNLA. These were not terrorist reprisals as the SPDC would have us believe, but rather punishment after the suspects had been tried by the KNU and found guilty of treason. That is not terrorism. The ethnic insurgents realize that terrorist tactics would be counterproductive to their cause. There is no need for them to use terror to obtain recruits or to get locals to support the insurgency. Recruits aren't hard to find among the Shan people when the *Tatmadaw* makes it a regular practice to enter villages, burn churches, houses and crops, gang-rape the women, and murder the old and sick. The systematic use of terror by the government has made any use of terror by the insurgents unnecessary.^{48 49}

The ethnic insurgents' actions do not fit O'Neill's definition of terrorism, but they do fit his definition of guerrilla warfare: “Highly mobile hit-and-run attacks by lightly to moderately armed forces that seek to harass the enemy and gradually erode his will and capability.”⁵⁰ O'Neill also states: “Guerrilla warfare also differs from terrorism because its primary targets are the government armed forces, police, and their support units, and in some cases, key economic targets, rather than unarmed civilians.”⁵¹

The use of terror is a means to an end, and persons, groups or governments who use it to achieve their goals become terrorists. The ethnic insurgents are not using acts of terror, but the SPDC is using them to maintain power, quell dissension and destroy the insurgents' support bases.

The *Tatmadaw's* use of terrorism is well-documented. In 2003, the Shan Human Rights Foundation published a book, *License to Rape*, on the Burmese military's use of sexual violence in the ongoing war in the

Shan State. The book contained evidence of more than 173 incidents of rape by Burmese soldiers from 1996 to 2001, documenting the use of rape by 52 different *Tatmadaw* battalions. According to the book, 83 percent of the rapes were committed by officers, many times in front of their troops. Torture and murder often followed the raping of the victims.

Attacks on refugee camps in neighboring Thailand, in so-called safe areas, are another tool of terror employed by the Burmese military. These camps, some recognized as UN refugee camps, have been raided by DKBA troops, with *Tatmadaw* support, in order to instill fear and commit genocide. The attacks have resulted in more than 20 Karen refugees killed, a similar number wounded, and 27 Thai soldiers killed protecting the camps.⁵²

Death Squads and Displacement: Systematic Executions, Village Destruction and the Plight of Villagers in Nyaunglebin District, published by the Karen Human Rights Group in May 1999, describes human-rights abuses committed by the *Tatmadaw*. The report documents for the first time reports of death squads being employed by the military. These units are known as the *Sa Sa Sa* or *Sa Thin Lon*, or guerrilla retaliation units. They belong to the SPDC's much-feared Directorate of Defense Services Intelligence, or DDSI.

The units began operations in September 1998. Their sole mission is to execute, without question, anyone suspected of present or past connection with the KNU or KNLA, regardless of how long ago or how slight that connection may have been. Their activities are no longer confined to one district but have spread over all of the Karen and Kayin states. According to the report, the units come at night in small groups, pull suspects from their beds and drag them into the jungle, from which they never emerge alive. Anyone trying to

interfere is immediately shot. The squads do not wear uniforms; their civilian clothing allows enable them to move relatively undetected. They demand food and money from villagers and stay in their homes, often abusing the females in the process. Villagers are forbidden to look into their faces; those who do are shot or tortured — all as part of the SPDC's counterinsurgency campaign.

Conclusion

The ethnic insurgents in Burma share characteristics with other insurgencies throughout the world in the areas of ideology, organization and structure. What is difficult to understand is how a brutal regime can repress its people for so long without some sort of insurgent success. The answers are many: The SPDC has total control over Burmese society. SPDC officers often have dual roles as military officers and civil administrators. Every facet of society is under the watchful eyes of the SPDC's intelligence services, and the SPDC is able to infiltrate into every social, political or insurgent group in Burma. All industry and commercial ventures are controlled by the SPDC and the military, and all foreign investments must go through the SPDC.

The military has been successful at COIN. It has isolated the ethnic insurgents into remote areas. It has gained external support from China that allows it to modernize and equip its military forces.⁵³ At the same time, the SPDC has successfully pressured neighboring countries not to support insurgent groups, thus denying the insurgents much-needed external support.

International pressure, economic sanctions and dialogue have not swayed the SPDC's generals to reform. Why should they? Their center of gravity is their grip on power, and the only thing that will force the SPDC to change is violence that

directly threatens that grip on power.

In spite of the lack of unified effort among the ethnic insurgents, they share the objectives of freedom, justice, ethnic rights and restoration of democracy. The insurgency in Burma continues; almost daily, lives are lost at the hands of the brutal regime of the SPDC while the world does virtually nothing. The limited international moral support given to some pro-democracy groups and ethnic insurgents is not enough. The ethnic insurgents desperately need immediate and rapid external support. It is the only thing that will change the regime.

The insurgency campaign should be fought on all fronts, military as well as political, and the pro-democracy groups need assistance in establishing a common ground on which the country can build a base government and democratic reforms. The insurgents also require an all-out propaganda war that will counter the regime's rhetoric, play on superstitions and motivate the people into action.

Without all of this, the ethnic insurgency is doomed to fail. The SPDC will maintain power; the ethnic minorities will either be subjugated, subjected to massive human-rights violations or murdered; the SPDC will continue to be a security threat to the region and to the world through its drug-trafficking and international crime; and the 50-year struggle for democracy in Burma will be extinguished. ❧

Author's note: Much of the information for this article was gained firsthand from talking to insurgent leaders, especially among the Karen and Shan. At times the author was able to gather information through conversation with Thai officers with whom he has served along the border regions where many of the insurgent groups operate and find refuge. Most of the examples depict the Shan and the Karen, with which the author is most familiar; but there are many more

complex groups that need further study, such as the Wa, the Mon, and the Kachin.

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Notes:

¹ Report about the Burma Ethnic Dialogue, adopted from the meeting held by the KNU and KNPP, September 6, 2000. This report cites that there are at least ten armed groups still in open opposition to the SPDC, they are: KNU, KNPP, NUPA, ACP, SSA, CNF, LDF, WNO, PNLO, PSLO, and the only real cease-fire groups being the UWSA and KIO.

² John H. McEnery, *Epilogue in Burma 1945-1948: The Military Dimensions of British Withdrawal* (Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 2000), 25, 46, 84-85.

³ Bertil Lintner, *Burma in Revolt: Opium and Insurgency Since 1948* (Chiang Mai, Thailand: Silk Worm Books, 1999), 69-71.

⁴ Khaing Soe Naing Aung, *National Democratic Movement of Ethnic Nationalities* (Rangoon, National Democratic Front, 2000), index. Herein are listed no less than 14 united fronts in political opposition from the SPDC.

⁵ Bertil Lintner, *The Rise and Fall of Com-*

munist Party of Burma (New York: Cornell University Press, 1990), 3-37.

⁶ Lintner, *Burma in Revolt*, 226-27, 235.

⁷ Lintner, *Burma in Revolt*, 146-47, 149-51.

⁸ Bard E. O'Neill, *Insurgency and Terrorism: Inside Modern Revolutionary Warfare* (London: Brassey's Inc.), 9.

⁹ O'Neill, 18.

¹⁰ Shan World, Official Web Site of the Shan, www.shanworld.com, 9/25/02.

¹¹ Martin Smith, *Burma: Insurgency and the Politics of Ethnicity* (Bangkok: White Lotus Press), 148-52.

¹² Smith, 152.

¹³ Smith, 180-81.

¹⁴ Christina Fink, *Living Silence: Burma Under Military Rule* (Bangkok: White Lotus Press), 226.

¹⁵ All this evidence and some very graphic photos of Burmese atrocities can be obtained from "Christians Concerned for Burma, Chiang Mai, Thailand." Their website is: www.prayforburma.org.

¹⁶ Personal discussion with KNU leaders and missionary friend.

¹⁷ Shan World, Official Web Site of the Shan, www.shanworld.com/politics, 9/25/02 "Why Independence?"

¹⁸ Smith, 147.

¹⁹ Khaing Soe Naing Aung, 31-32.

²⁰ Smith, 85.

²¹ Personal conversation with former defense attaché in Burma, Colonel Jack C. Dibrell, U.S. Army.

²² Congress, House, Congressional Human Rights Caucus, Human Rights in Burma; Hearings before the Congressional Human Rights Caucus, 106th Congress, 2d sess., 28 October 2000, E2007-08.

²³ "Thaksin Vows to Maintain Policy," *Bangkok Post*, 30 June 2002.

²⁴ Personal conversation with Thai Army officers who recalled former joint military cooperation with the KNU during Thailand's problems with communist insurgents. For recent situation of Thai Army forcing refugees back into Burma, see *63 Lives That Do Not Matter*, by Saw Takkaw, December 2002, KNU. This publication traces the plight of 63 refugees who were eventually forced back across the border by the 9th Infantry Division to face war and the SPDC.

²⁵ Personal conversation with Brigadier General Isaac, KNU, and a missionary friend of mine. This missionary works almost daily with the leadership of the KNU, KNLA much of the time inside Burma.

²⁶ O'Neill, 63.

²⁷ O'Neill, 64.

²⁸ O'Neill, 65.

²⁹ Lintner, *Burma in Revolt*, 129, 131-32.

³⁰ This fact was recently told to me by the current (2003) U.S. defense attaché to Hanoi, Socialist Republic of Vietnam. He came across

this information from reviewing old Vietnamese government documents discussing the China-Vietnam border conflicts.

³¹ Shelby Tucker, *Among Insurgents: Walking Through Burma* (Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 2000), 355.

³² Smith, 379.

³³ This information about training by PLA was given to me by two different sources, the first from a Christian missionary friend of mine, who is also a former U.S. Army Special Forces officer. This missionary makes overland journeys into remote Wa-controlled territory and has seen firsthand many training camps. Although he has not seen firsthand any PLA troops, he has been told of their presence. The second source is a former Thai military-intelligence officer who has made several journeys contacting the Wa. He has confirmed the PLA presence and insists he witnessed firsthand their cadre.

³⁴ Congress, House, Congressional Human Rights Caucus, Human Rights in Burma; Hearings before the Congressional Human Rights Caucus, 106th Congress, 2d sess., 28 October 2000, E2007-08.

³⁵ Shan World, 9/25/02.

³⁶ Chao Tzang Yawnghe, *The Shan of Burma: Memoirs of a Shan in Exile* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1987), 116.

³⁷ Lintner, *Burma in Revolt*, 511.

³⁸ No biographies exist of these three men, but I gained this information from my personal relationship with all three.

³⁹ O'Neill, 34-35.

⁴⁰ O'Neill, 36.

⁴¹ O'Neill, 36-37.

⁴² Fink, 45; and Smith, 258-60.

⁴³ Smith, 259.

⁴⁴ Personal note: Many discussions with KNU and SSA leaders reiterate that terrorism is not, nor will it be, employed by them.

⁴⁵ Terrorism Research Center, www.terrorism.com 6/12/03.

⁴⁶ U.S. Department of the Army, FM 100-25, *Doctrine for Army Special Operations Forces* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1991), Glossary-25.

⁴⁷ O'Neill, 24.

⁴⁸ The Shan Human Rights Foundation, *License to Rape: The Burmese Military Regime's Use of Sexual Violence in the Ongoing War in Shan State* (Chiang Mai, Thailand: SWAN, 2002), 1, 7-125.

⁴⁹ Karen Human Rights Group, *Death Squads and Displacement: Systematic Execution, Village Destruction and the Flight of Villagers in Nyaunglebin District* (1999), 6-19.

⁵⁰ O'Neill, 25.

⁵¹ O'Neill, 26.

⁵² Images Asia and Borderline Video, "A Question of Security" (Chiang Mai, Thailand: Nopburi Press, 1998), 11-27.

Insurgency in Iraq: A Soldier's Perspective

by Captain Eric Lyon

There is an organized and dedicated insurgent movement fighting a deadly war of attrition in Iraq. While there are three distinct insurgent movements in Iraq, the most prominent is the Sunni insurgent movement, which dominates the central and northern regions of Iraq. Less-well organized and less visible are the Islamic fundamentalist movement in the Kurdish regions adjacent to the Iranian border and the Shia insurgent movement in the southern region of Iraq. The Sunni movement is the most virulent, persistent and widespread. Names like Ramadi, Fallujah and Baqubah underline the seriousness and deadliness of the Sunni insurgent movement.

Insurgency organization

While the Sunni movement is organized and disciplined at the local level, it does not have a unified front at the provincial and regional levels. The Sunni insurgency is a fledgling movement that had its inception during the coalition's occupation of Iraq. The insurgency's largest failing, because it is a new movement, is its lack of unity of command and a corresponding

weakness in organization and structure at its highest levels. As such, it is at times difficult to discern an overarching goal or strategy for the insurgents because of their leadership conflicts and lack of a single vision; however, certain strategies and goals have become clear based upon the insurgents' actions.

Motivation

The Sunnis' fundamental goal, one of the central tenets that the leadership does agree on, is a return of national power to the Sunni people. Prior to the U.S. invasion, the Sunnis dominated the country and kept the Shia and Kurdish populations under the jackboot of Stalin-esque rule. For the insurgents, there is no compromise on the issue of national control.

The Sunni people, who provide the popular support base for the insurgents, are motivated by the fear of living in a country populated by their former victims. They are frightened at their own prospects under a government that would clearly be dominated by a Shia majority. The Shias make up about 65 percent of the country's population, and have begun to organize themselves into a strong political

coalition, with the approach of the upcoming elections.¹ The Sunnis are in a tenuous position, with Kurds in the north, Iranian Shia to the east and Iraqi Shia to the south. Sunni resistance stems from fear of reprisals for past actions. Sunnis believe that they are fighting not only for their current livelihoods but also for their future prosperity and security.

Strategy

The insurgents' strategy is to conduct an unconventional war of attrition in an effort to wear down the coalition over time. The insurgents do not have to win today, tomorrow or next year. They know that the key to success is the ability to sustain combat operations over time, year after year, until the enemy is no longer willing to continue.

The insurgents will not wear down the coalition militarily, but they hope to outlast the coalition politically. The models for the insurgents' war of attrition can be found in Vietnam, Afghanistan and Chechnya. The insurgents seek to avoid a conventional conflict based on a timetable or a sense of urgency, choosing instead to wage a protracted guerrilla war that focuses on

defeating the enemy in the same way that the dripping of water wears away the toughest rock.

Terrorism

Embarking on an aggressive strategy of international terrorism, the insurgents aim to manipulate coalition forces, their allies and their domestic publics. An example of this strategy is the March 2004 bombing of the Spanish public rail system that killed and wounded almost 2,000 Spanish citizens. The attack was effective, forcing a change of government in Madrid and ensuring that the Spanish people would no longer support the war in Iraq. The insurgents have used similar terror tactics to pressure the Philippines, Turkey and Egypt to prevent their involvement in Iraq or force their early exit. An example is the kidnapping of Philippine workers, which led to the early withdrawal of Philippine troops from the region.

The insurgents' strategic use of terrorism, while deplorable, has been successful and should be expected to continue at an increased pace. By employing terrorism, the insurgents are trying to divide the coalition partners and to cause rifts within the individual countries between the populace and the elected government.

The insurgents have followed a divide-and-conquer policy within Iraq's borders, much like they have with the coalition forces. The Sunni resistance initially tried to garner support from the Kurdish and Shia elements within the country by building a coalition under the flag of nationalism and anti-Western sentiment. That attempt failed to win any real support. The Kurds and Shia were not interested in participating in a movement that would be dominated by their former oppressors and which would ultimately end in Sunni rule of Baghdad. The Sunni motivations

were transparent, and the Kurds and Shia opted to follow independent courses. The decision not to fall in line with the Sunnis has cost both groups in blood. The Sunni insurgents have not hesitated to punish those who do not support the insurgency: They have employed a variety of tactics, from

They know that the key to success is the ability to sustain combat operations over time, year after year, until the enemy is no longer willing to continue. The insurgents will not wear down the coalition militarily, but they hope to outlast the coalition politically.

car bombs to assassinations and kidnappings, targeting Kurdish and Shia leaders.

East vs. West

One goal of the insurgents is to incite a larger conflict on many levels. They are willing to take some losses in provoking a Shia-Sunni conflict in Iraq. Although the Shia are a majority in Iraq, they are a minority in the Arab world, and the Sunnis believe that such a conflict would mobilize the Sunni Arab world against the Shia. The insurgents would incite this greater Shia-Sunni conflict knowing that the Sunni would prevail. The insurgents would also like to incite a larger East-West conflict between the Islamic world and the U.S. Clearly, the insurgents have made

a specific effort to drive a wedge between the Muslim world and the Christian world. Additionally, the insurgents hope to portray themselves as victims of the U.S. in order to transform Iraq into a lightning rod for other terrorists motivated by the desire to weaken and attack the U.S. That desire is a tune that plays well in the Middle East, and it is a convenient excuse for other Islamic extremists to perpetrate attacks on the West.

Exit strategy

The insurgents have made it a priority to target indigenous organizations and personalities for destruction including the Iraqi Police, the Iraqi National Guard and prominent government officials. The insurgents believe that their own countrymen pose the biggest threat to the insurgent movement, and they understand that if the coalition is going to implement an effective exit strategy, the Iraqi government and armed forces will have to stand on their own.

The insurgents believe that the U.S. is not going to occupy their country indefinitely and that the American public will not support a protracted and costly war. The link to a successful exit for the coalition is a competent and confident indigenous capability — as represented by an effective police force, a successful military and a stable government — that has the support of the Iraqi people. By targeting the fledgling government, the insurgents have targeted the foundation for the coalition's successful withdrawal from the country. The premature withdrawal of coalition forces because of a lack of U.S. domestic support, while the Iraqi government is still too weak to defend its position, is a major goal of the insurgent. Such a withdraw-

al by the coalition would allow the insurgents to concentrate on overthrowing the government.

Left unchecked, the Sunni insurgents will build a better future for themselves on the backs of their countrymen. That is no surprise to the coalition or to the citizens of Iraq. Clearly, the insurgents are willing to employ any tactic or method, no matter how gruesome, to achieve their goals. They will continue to develop and evolve as an outlawed organization by capitalizing on their successes and continuing to employ policies and tactics that seek to upset the coalition's efforts of counterinsurgency, or COIN. However, aggressive implementation of the COIN model by the coalition can lead to the defeat of the insurgents. It will take a significant commitment of manpower and resources to defeat the enemy, but it is feasible if the proper COIN strategy is employed in an aggressive manner.

COIN strategy

In order for the coalition to implement a comprehensive COIN strategy it must have a thorough understanding of unconventional warfare and take into account the mentality and tactics of guerrilla fighters and terrorists. The members of the coalition must convey that understanding to their own people to ensure that there will be domestic support for the coalition's COIN strategy. The coalition countries' own populations must understand that deadlines cannot be set for defeating the insurgents.

The coalition must win the support of the Iraqi people and deny the insurgents the support of the local populace. The insurgents exist because they have a certain measure of popular support. People hide them, supply them and heal them. Without the Iraqi people, the insur-



Army News Service

Sergeant First Class Ron Miko, 416th Civil Affairs Battalion, trains correction cadets at the Mosul Regional Confinement Facility in July. The cadets were learning riot-control techniques.

gents cannot exist at a level that is a real threat to the government. On the other hand, the coalition needs the support of the people to man the Iraqi police force, to fill the ranks of the military, to support the government and to inform on the insurgents. It follows that the coalition must enforce a nationwide campaign to win the support of the population, which includes the energetic employment of Civil Affairs units, medical civic-action programs, or MEDCAPs, public works, humanitarian aid, and most importantly, information operations.

The coalition must present the conflict to the Iraqi people in a way that will show the benefits of supporting the new government and will also show the price that comes of following the destructive path blazed by the insurgents. It is critical that the coalition implement a nationwide information campaign to win the war of perception, attitudes and ideas. An effective campaign will require the coordinated employment of every media asset, and Internet sites. The insurgents have already recognized the key

role that the Iraqi people play, and they have implemented an aggressive and effective information campaign that is shaping the opinions of the population. Imams entrenched in their mosques have energized the leaders of the Islamic community to create a propaganda machine that is working overtime to win the hearts and minds of the people. The coalition must do the same, but they must do it better than the insurgents.

Security organizations

As the war for the minds of the Iraqi people moves forward, the coalition must embark on a comprehensive training program for local security elements. The Iraqi Police, or IP, must be trained, supervised and advised on a daily basis. The police are the first line of defense against the insurgents and are the government's most effective information network in the intelligence battle. The IP must have a robust SWAT capability and well-trained undercover surveillance units that can gather

incriminating information and evidence on the insurgents. The Iraqi National Guard, or ING, is the next layer of defense. The ING must handle any situation that the police cannot. They must have a strong light-infantry capability and possess specialized units that are skilled in surveillance and direct-action operations. Both the IP and the ING need to be well-equipped and operating effectively.

The Iraqi Army, or IA, must be trained in the execution of successful COIN operations. Proper training and equipment will prepare them to defeat an insurgent movement that may advance into a war-of-movement phase. Beyond these unconventional military capabilities, the IA must be capable of maintaining Iraq's national integrity, defending the nation against hostile countries and mili-



Army News Service

A Civil Affairs Soldier with the 422nd Civil Affairs Battalion, an Army Reserve unit based in Greensboro, N.C., consoles a crying Iraqi baby after it was given shots to prevent diseases such as measles or mumps. Immunization clinics and other medical clinics are one way of winning the hearts and minds of the Iraqi people.

taries if necessary. The three organizations — IP, ING and IA — must be capable of providing security to the people and stability to their own government. If they are not capable of doing that, they will lose the struggle once the coalition forces exit the country.

Primary military target

As indigenous security organizations become trained, the coalition must make it a priority to target and destroy the insurgent leadership. This campaign of leadership “decapitation” must be relentless and merciless. The insurgent leadership must be prevented from developing their movement into a more sophisticated and popularly supported organization. The leadership must be harried and hounded so that it cannot effectively lead the movement because its leaders are on the run, imprisoned or dead. A leaderless organization will founder and will be unable to accomplish its ambitious political goals.

If the enemy leadership is allowed to perform its role, the insurgent organization will become more skilled, more resilient and more deadly. The key to keeping the insurgency disorganized and divided is to target and eliminate the leadership at all levels. Army special operation forces, or ARSOF, have proven themselves to be uniquely adept at this task of leadership removal, and ARSOF missions should continue to be emphasized and supported as an integral part of the coalition's COIN operations.

Undercutting the insurgents

While the insurgency is reeling from its leadership losses, the coalition has to steal the insurgents' movement out from under them.

This will take a concerted effort that focuses on retooling the justice system, legitimizing the government and providing the Sunni people with protection and rights under the new government.

The Sunni population has to be convinced and assured that its members will be protected under the new government and that a government composed largely of Shia representatives will not oppress them. That will be a tough idea to sell, as the Sunnis are already balking at the idea of the elections' legitimacy. Many of the insurgents and sympathizers believe that voting in the scheduled January elections is equivalent to selling out to an American-crafted election process.

However, Sunni Muslim political leaders have begun to look at the elections in a different light. They are encouraging the insurgent groups to become part of the political process, while other Sunnis do not have to be encouraged. Some of the population has begun to disagree with the insurgents, asserting that free, democratic elections are the only way to curb the Islamic extremism in the Sunni territory.²

For the remaining Sunnis, it must be proven that their fears of retribution are unfounded. A strong legal system must be constructed and enforced, giving assurance to the insurgent supporters that they will be treated fairly and justly in the new Iraq, and that criminals, insurgents and terrorists will be punished.

The Iraqi government must be viewed by the people as strong, fair, just and purposeful. The Iraqi people have to trust their government, which in turn must be founded on laws and rules, not on tribal affiliations and nepotism. If the Iraqi legal system remains corrupt and the government weak



Army News Service

Members of the U.S. Army's 422nd Civil Affairs Battalion provide security for visitors to the Al-Salhya fire station in Karkh, Iraq. Providing stability and security for the Iraqi people is one way of defeating the insurgents.

and confused, the Iraqi people will not look to them for answers to their problems. The government must provide the solution to its peoples' problems, or the insurgents will.

Closing the borders

The coalition's job of implementing the above COIN elements will be extremely difficult if it does not achieve control of Iraq's borders, especially those with Iran and Syria. The insurgents receive a great deal of their support from outside Iraq's borders. Foreign fighters, money and weapons flow across the borders and into the insurgent organizations. The Shia insurgents receive massive aid and support from Iran, making coalition efforts to monitor or control Shia insurgent organizations difficult, if not impossible.

It has also been established that Sunni insurgents travel regularly to Syria and Jordan in their efforts to avoid capture by the coalition. Their resilience as an organization is helped significantly by this border transparency.

Allowing the insurgents to find safe havens across borders is a cardinal mistake in the attempt to implement a comprehensive COIN campaign. Consequently, the coalition must focus significant forces on Iraq's borders, as must the Iraqi indigenous government and its respective military organizations. Iraq's less-than-helpful neighbors must be pressured politically into denying support for the insurgents and leveraged into closing their borders to the insurgents.

A prime example of the need to close the borders is the growth of the insurgent movement under Abu Musab Zarqawi. Zarqawi is the most wanted man in Iraq, and he is leading a new generation of Islamic radicals. Zarqawi and his followers have embraced tactics designed to generate publicity. They are responsible for the kidnapping and subsequent beheadings of Nicholas Berg, Jack Armstrong and Jack Hensley, all American businessmen. It is hard for U.S. intelligence sources to pin Zarqawi's location down, as he moves frequently, and with rela-

tive ease, among Iran, Syria, Lebanon and Iraq.³

Conventional forces

One of the singular tasks the coalition's conventional military forces must accomplish is providing immediate, short-term security and stability for the Iraqi people. The insurgents offer only a negative force in this arena, for they have created Iraq's insecurity and instability. They create the daily havoc and destruction that Iraq now witnesses. The insurgents capitalize on this self-produced chaos and argue that the coalition and the government cannot protect the people and that only the insurgents can bring about stability. Ironically, this stability can be achieved only when the insurgents purposely cease their destructive combat operations. The coalition is forced to play the insurgents' game in order to prevent violence and insecurity.

In order to achieve security, the coalition must introduce population-control measures such as checkpoints, searches, curfews and identity-card systems, and they

must enforce the peace with routine and omnipresent security patrols. The coalition has to be able to enforce this peace on a daily basis so that normalcy and commerce dominate daily life, not drive-by shootings and assassinations. Conventional coalition military forces must also successfully defeat any insurgent war of movement that arises (such as the uprisings in Najaf and Fallujah) until the Iraqi government can do so on its own.

Synergy

The coalition's COIN campaign must be comprehensive. All the elements that make up a successful COIN program have to be integrated and coordinated at the national level and implemented simultaneously. When these elements combine, they have a synergistic effect against the insurgency and will achieve a significantly greater effect.

If only some measures are applied and others are not, or if specific measures are halfheartedly implemented, holes will be created in the campaign that will be quickly identified and exploited by the enemy. In this sense, the insurgents are like water; they will flow through holes in the plan and continue to thwart COIN goals. The coalition must critically analyze its own COIN program, honestly assessing the successes and failures of the program and adjusting it accordingly.

In historical examples of COIN failures, interagency bickering, internal Army politics, entrenched careerism and a lack of understanding of unconventional warfare have doomed COIN efforts to failure despite very real prospects of success. Vietnam provides a vivid example of such a self-inflicted COIN failing.

In Vietnam, military commanders were more concerned with punching their ticket, getting promoted and toeing the optimistic party line. Few senior leaders were willing to stand up and say that all was not rosy with the military's COIN efforts in Vietnam until Saigon collapsed and tens of thousands of Americans had been

The insurgents capitalize on this self-produced chaos and argue that the coalition and the government cannot protect the people and that only the insurgents can bring about stability. Ironically, this stability can be achieved only when the insurgents purposely cease their destructive combat operations.

shipped home in body bags. The American military was doctrinally unprepared to fight a guerrilla war before, during and after Vietnam. Its primary focus was on the high-intensity warfare that would have been employed if the U.S. had fought a war with the Soviet Union.

Conclusion

The Iraq insurgency exhibits fundamental elements found in insurgencies like Vietnam and in the Afghani resistance to the Soviet Union. The coalition in Iraq must understand that military force is just one tool in the battle

against the insurgents. In fact, military force is a minor part of an overall COIN campaign. The U.S. won all the battles in Vietnam and still lost the war. The U.S. has and will continue to win all the military battles in Iraq. However, the insurgents do not have to win the military battles: Commitment and dedication trump tanks and helicopters. It is a war of political attrition and a war of national wills, not a war of massed formations and massive firepower.

Often, conventional military might is irrelevant and counterproductive. Nation building, economic stability, indigenous training programs and political legitimacy are the real war-winning weapons of the coalition. The insurgents win by not losing, and they seek to fight the war in America's living rooms and on Americans' televisions. The insurgents need to beat the coalition's domestic publics, not their militaries. A war of attrition, dragged out over time, as coalition casualties mount day after day, is the war the insurgents are prosecuting. Only an intelligent, comprehensive COIN strategy, implemented and enforced at the national level, and based on a thorough understanding of unconventional warfare, will defeat the insurgency and provide Iraq with a brighter future. ✂

Captain Eric Lyon is a detachment commander with the 3rd Battalion, 10th Special Forces Group. He recently completed a tour of duty in Iraq.

Notes:

¹ Nancy A. Youssef and Hannah Allam, "Seeking Vote Clout, Sunnis Woo Militants," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 13 October 2004.

² Youssef and Allam.

³ Craig Whitlock, "Grisly Path to Power in Iraq's Insurgency," *The Washington Post*, 27 September 2004.

Enlisted Career Notes

Special Warfare

CMF 38 approved, MOS 38A converts to 38B

The Department of the Army approved the revision of Career Management Field, or CMF, 38 (Civil Affairs) on July 21. Changes to CMF 38 will be effective Oct. 1, 2005. The 38B military occupational specialty, or MOS, (Enlisted Civil Affairs) will be added to the Active Army, and Soldiers serving in MOS 38A (Enlisted Civil Affairs) will be converted to MOS 38B. Accordingly, all 38A positions and selected positions in the 11B, 21B and 18 series will be recoded to 38B.

The Army is developing a process that will allow Soldiers currently assigned to the 96th Civil Affairs Battalion to request reclassification to MOS 38B and remain in the Active Army Civil Affairs community. Other Soldiers seeking to reclassify into Civil Affairs must have five years of service and be in the grade of E5 or E6.

The Army is also developing a process that will enable Army Reserve Soldiers to become members of the Active Army 38B MOS. To ensure the proper filling of the force, the Army is devising an implementation strategy that includes publication of the accessions process, development and execution of a 38B reclassification course (targeted for July/August 2005) and the Human Resources Command/Special Operations Recruiting Company recruitment mission.

For additional information, telephone Major Kevin M. Shackelford, CA branch manager, SWCS Directorate of Special Operations Proponency, at DSN 239-6406, commercial (910) 432-6406, or send e-mail to: shacklke@soc.mil.

CMF 37 attains 100-percent selection rate to E8

The fiscal year 2005 master sergeant promotion board selected all 24 Soldiers from Career Management Field 37 (Psychological Operations) who were eligible. This was the first year that the CMF has had a 100-percent selection rate. The selectees' average time in service was 14 years, and their average time in grade was three years. More than 60 percent had some college education. For additional information, telephone Master Sergeant Donald C. Barton at DSN 239-6995 or commercial (910) 432-6993, or send e-mail to: bartond@soc.mil.

E8 promotion board selects 238 SF NCOs

The fiscal year 2005 master sergeant promotion board selected 238 Special Forces NCOs for promotion. That number surpassed the previous high of 187 set in FY 2004. SF's selection rate was 19 percent; Infantry's was 20 percent, and the Army overall selection rate was 13 percent. The increase in promotion rates is due primarily to the creation of vacancies as master sergeants who were retained under stop-loss during FY 2002-03 retire or make plans to retire in FY 2005. A look at the results of the FY 2005 board shows the average SF E7 selected for promotion had 16 years service, had four to five years' time in grade, and was 35 years old, which is on par with historical norms. For additional information, telephone Master Sergeant Larry P. Deel at DSN 239-7594 or commercial (910) 432-7594, or send e-mail to: deell@soc.mil.



Officer Career Notes

Special Warfare

SF officers get 55-percent promotion rate to O6

The fiscal year 2004 colonel promotion board selected 11 of the 20 Special Forces officers in the zone, making SF's promotion rate 55 percent. One SF officer was selected of the 22 above the zone, and two were selected of the 31 below the zone. For additional information, telephone Lieutenant Colonel Mark Strong at DSN 239-3296 or commercial (910) 432-3296, or send e-mail to: strongm@soc.mil.

FA 39 SSC selection rate below OPCF average

The 2004 senior-service-college selection rate for FA 39 was below the average for the Army's Operations Career Field, or OPCF. The OPCF average selection rate was 8.4 percent; FA 39's rate was 5.7 percent. FA 39 needed only two more officers selected for SSC to meet the OPCF average.

Exception to policy grants ILE credit for NPS programs

On Oct. 15, Lieutenant General James J. Lovelace, Department of the Army G3, approved an exception to policy granting credit to Special Forces, Psychological Operations and Civil Affairs students for completion of their intermediate-level education, or ILE, upon their completion of a degree program at the Naval Postgraduate School, or NPS. Officers attending NPS must complete the 12-week ILE Core Course while in residence. For additional information, Special Forces officers should telephone Major Dale R. Buckner in the SF Officer Branch, Human Resources Command, at DSN 221-5739, commercial (703) 325-5739, or send e-mail to: bucknerd@hoffman.army.mil. CA and PSYOP officers should telephone Lieutenant Colonel Leo Ruth, Human Resources Command, at DSN 221-3115, commercial (703) 325-3115, or send e-mail to: leo.ruth@hoffman.army.mil.

SF officers earn 10-percent selection rate for SSC

The fiscal year 2004 board for senior service college, or SSC, selected eight Special Forces officers for attendance. Six of the selectees are from year group 1984, and two are from year group 1985. The overall selection rate was 10 percent, as the year groups are roughly the same size (40 and 39 officers, respectively). Successful battalion command continues to be the dominant trend among SSC selectees.

FA 39's above-the-zone O6 selection rate tops OPCF average

In-the-zone promotion rates for Functional Area 39 under the fiscal year 2004 colonel promotion board were below the average of the Operations Career Field, or OPCF. Only three of the eight in-the-zone FA 39 officers were selected. Officers not selected included two former battalion commanders. However, FA 39's above-the-zone selection rate was above that of the OPCF: 9.1 percent vs. 3.4 percent. For additional information, telephone Jeanne Goldmann at DSN 239-6922, commercial (910) 432-6922, or send e-mail to: goldmanj@soc.mil.



Foreign SOF

Special Warfare

Private intelligence draws scrutiny in Brazil

The longstanding, widespread and growing use of private security firms in many parts of the world evokes acute concern among governments that exercise little control over the firms' activities. Security and intelligence companies — whose capabilities are often quite sophisticated thanks to new information-management and surveillance technologies — play a major role in providing corporate risk assessments, protecting private assets and proprietary information, and providing direct security for other aspects of business operations. In Brazil, the director of the Brazilian Intelligence Agency, or ABIN, and other members of the nation's intelligence establishment are supporting legislation that would improve their oversight and control of sophisticated intelligence-gathering activities within the country. The initiative is sparked not so much by private security efforts themselves, but by the murky areas where government-corporate interaction may subject national or foreign government personnel and organizations to private intelligence gathering activities. In July, a large international security firm hired by a Brazilian telecommunications corporation collected information on a rival foreign corporation that came to involve the communications and activities of government members. The ABIN wants to more closely regulate the work of private intelligence agencies and prevent the usurpation of activities that are reserved for official government organizations.

Basque leadership may create new group

The terrorist group Basque Fatherland and Liberty, or ETA, is facing difficult organizational and leadership problems. Its cadre has been badly damaged in a series of recent arrests of key personnel. At the same time, splits among some aging veteran members who favor political activity and younger, more militant members who favor continued violence, are raising questions about the direction of ETA's future. Spanish and French counterterrorist crackdowns in the wake of the March 11, 2004, terrorist train bombings by Islamic extremists have also created a more hostile operational environment for ETA activities. The revulsion of Spanish citizens at losses from the attacks has reduced an already shrinking traditional support base. Old ETA veterans — now in their middle years but once among the most active and violent of European terrorists — don't decry the violence itself, but they believe that the ETA no longer has the capacity and freedom to continue on its old path. Younger group members — less ideological, less sophisticated internationally, more militant and practitioners of "kale borroka" pro-ETA street violence and thuggery — appear to have embarked upon the creation of a new group that avoids the old local infrastructure that they believe to be infiltrated and exhausted. There is a fear that ETA, like a number of post-Cold War terrorist organizations, may become as much interested in criminal profit or in unfocused violence as the ETA once was in pursuing the Marxist/separatist organizational goals that animated recruiting and

Russian GRU honored on Russian Special Forces Day

activities. The role that still-extensive ETA networks in Latin America might play in such a development is far from clear. In addition, some analysts think that a new ETA might be more inclined to cooperate with the most extreme Islamic groups, drawing on their “revolutionary energy” to revitalize their activities, reaching some perverted common cause in the interest of mutual support. For the present, this remains speculation, but it is clear that ETA is in the throes of change that is drawing the closest attention from Spanish, French and international security organizations.

This year’s Russian Armed Forces Special Forces Day, commemorated on Oct. 24, 2004, highlighted some new or little-known details of the Russian general staff’s Main Intelligence Directorate, or GRU, forces of special designation — Spetsnaz. GRU Spetsnaz is said to have been formed in 1950. As Russian military reform continues, discussion is underway regarding the effectiveness, manning practices and compensation of GRU Spetsnaz — which still relies at least in part on conscripts — in comparison to units now largely manned by volunteers under contract. For example, in describing the effectiveness for one Spetsnaz unit in the 1979-89 Soviet-Afghan war — the 15th GRU Spetsnaz Brigade — it is claimed that the unit maintained control of an area twice the size of Chechnya. Brigade units are said to have eliminated or captured 9,000 mujahedin in the last three years of the Afghan occupation and to have seized huge numbers of armaments, at a cost of 140 GRU officers and men killed. The GRU is judged to have been more effective than other forces. Further, using the example of Chechnya, it is claimed that GRU Spetsnaz are extraordinarily efficient in comparison with other units. For example, the following (unverifiable) figures are cited for the number of Russian troops from various types of units that are required to eliminate a single Chechen fighter: The 42nd Motorized Rifle Division, permanently deployed in Chechnya and almost fully manned on a contract basis, has a ratio of 1,000 motorized rifle personnel per Chechan combatant eliminated; the Ministry of Internal Affairs, or MVD, units, which in Chechnya include “operational designation” units as well as MVD spetsnaz and special police, have ratios from 149 to 30 soldiers per combatant eliminated (the latter, lower ratio is presumably associated with the more elite Internal Troop special-designation forces, which are based on mixed conscript-contract manning); airborne troops — notably the contract-manned 76th Guards Pskov Airborne Division — require 27 paratroopers on the average to eliminate one militant. In the GRU Spetsnaz, where conscripts serve, the ratio is reported to be four soldiers per militant eliminated. These kinds of claims have generated arguments that GRU forces are under-compensated in comparison to the better-paid contract personnel and are more effective — even with conscripts — for the type of actions being fought in Chechnya. These kinds of discussions will clearly continue as Russian military “transformation” is debated and implemented.



This feature is produced under the auspices of the Joint Special Operations University, Strategy Division, Strategic Studies Group. Items in this issue were written by Dr. Graham H. Turbiville Jr., a senior fellow of the JSOU Strategic Studies Group.

Update

Special Warfare

New PSYOP battalion activated at Fort Bragg

The Army's newest Psychological Operations battalion was formally activated during a ceremony held at Fort Bragg Oct. 19.

The 5th Psychological Operations Battalion is the latest addition to the 4th Psychological Operations Group and is a much-needed supplement to PSYOP forces engaged in the fight against terrorism, said Colonel Jack Summe, the 4th POG commander.

After its activation, the 5th PSYOP Battalion became the sixth subordinate battalion of the 4th POG. The battalion will assume responsibility for all PSYOP activities in the U.S. Pacific Command theater of operations, which includes the Far East and the Pacific Rim, Summe said. — *SGT Kyle Cosner, USASOC PAO*

CA, PSYOP to increase in-service recruiting efforts

In an effort to meet the needs of a transforming Army and to address the challenges of the Global War on Terrorism, Army special-operations forces will expand their mission of in-service recruiting to include officers and NCOs for Civil Affairs, or CA, and Psychological Operations, or PSYOP.

Programmed growth in CA and PSYOP over the next two years motivates a recruiting effort to ensure that the ARSOF community accesses the best candidates. Moreover, the formation of CA and PSYOP branches for officers and the creation of an active-component CA enlisted military occupational specialty, 38B, require the ability to access officers and NCOs in



Photo by Kyle Cosner

LTC Kyle D. Hickman (left), commander of the 5th PSYOP Battalion, receives his unit's colors from COL Jack Summe, 4th PSYOP Group commander.

excess of current numbers. For additional information, telephone Lieutenant Colonel Curtis D. Boyd of the SWCS Directorate of Special Operations Proponency, at DSN 239-7576, commercial (910) 432-7576, or send e-mail to boydc@soc.mil.

USACAPOC developing GWOT historical collection

The U.S. Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command is collecting data from USACAPOC units concerning their activities in the Global War on Terrorism.

The U.S. Army Reserve Citizen Warrior Message 2003-13, dtg 061200 Nov 03, requires Army Reserve units to provide the following information as a minimum: a unit narrative; an after-action review; unit briefing slides;

autobiographical sketches of individual Soldiers; and photographs, said Lieutenant Colonel David B. Spencer, USACAPOC historical officer. For additional information, telephone Spencer at DSN 239-1733, commercial (910) 432-1733, or send e-mail to: spencerd@soc.mil.

DoD to increase language proficiency pay

President Bush has signed into law the authority for the Department of Defense, or DoD, to increase foreign-language proficiency pay, or FLPP, for members of the active Army and U.S. Army Reserve, or USAR.

Under the new law, the FLPP cap for the active Army will be raised from \$300 per month to \$1,000 per month. USAR FLPP will be changed to an annual bonus that will not exceed \$6,000. Because the law provides no additional funding, it will be incumbent upon the services to allocate the funds.

Implementation guidance from DoD is pending. Once DoD guidance has been issued, the services will in turn develop their own instructions for implementation.

For further information, contact either Lieutenant Colonel John J. Donnelly, chief of the U.S. Army Special Operations Command's SOF Language Office, at DSN 239-2534, commercial (910) 432-2534, e-mail: donneljo@soc.mil; or Jeanne Goldmann, Directorate of Special Operations Proponency, at DSN 239-6922, commercial (910) 432-6922, e-mail: goldmanj@soc.mil.



Book Reviews

Special Warfare

Red Acropolis, Black Terror: The Greek Civil War and the Origins of the Soviet-American Rivalry. By Andre Gerolymatos. New York: Basic Books, 2004. ISBN: 0-465-02743-1, 352 pages. \$27.50.

For a student of the Balkans, insurgencies and United States national security, Andre Gerolymatos' new book, *Red Acropolis, Black Terror*, appears to be filled with promise and potential. Unfortunately, appearances can be deceiving, and the book disappoints on nearly all counts.

The subject is timely, given that the Greek Civil War resulted in America's first real success in nation-building, and it could provide some valuable lessons for the U.S.-led efforts of building a democratic nation in Iraq. But while the subject could be instructive for U.S. policy-makers, this book is not.

Red Acropolis, Black Terror is nominally organized on a chronological basis, but Gerolymatos has taken what should be a simple and explanatory method and made it confusing. He provides a short introduction, five long chapters and a short epilogue. The introduction adds almost no value. The main chapters cover the pre-World War II period, the Axis occupation period, the so-called Battle of Athens, the immediate aftermath of that period and the final portion of the civil war, all about equal in length. The epilogue tries to make the connection to Vietnam.

What causes most of the confusion is Gerolymatos' tendency to jump about within each chapter's

period (and often between periods) within one chapter. I have read extensively on this subject and have written about it as well, and I could not follow him most of the time. A novice would have real problems. A timeline with major events and characters at the beginning of the book would have helped. The bottom line is that a more disciplined use of chronology would have greatly aided the reader's understanding.

Stylistically, Gerolymatos is a far better writer than most historians, and the book reads well (except for the confusion noted above). The author can never be accused of writing for sheer volume, because he makes his point and moves on, and that helps the book to flow.

Gerolymatos has a tendency to use names of Greek personalities that are probably not familiar to the average reader. A fuller explanation of each player at the first

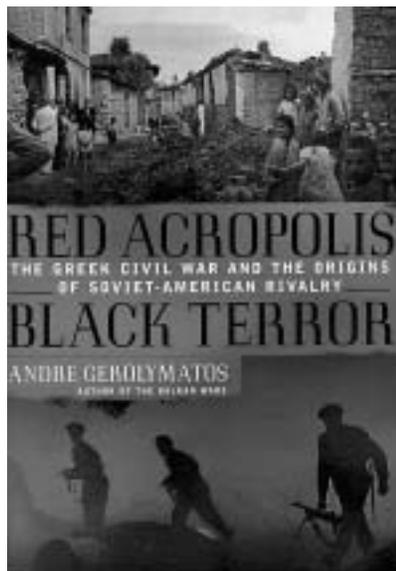
usage would have been a great help. In defense of the author, the reviewed copy was a pre-publication draft, and it can be assumed that many of these problems will be cleaned up in the final version.

As to the content, Gerolymatos gives quite a bit of new information, mostly from interviews. He does tend to get in the weeds, spending a great deal of time on small and insignificant incidents that he says typify the lives of "nearly all Greeks," a claim that is broad enough to require proof.

Gerolymatos also leans toward the left, or at least well away from the right, as to who is to blame and who were the "bad guys" in the protracted struggle. Looking at the chapter titles is instructive here. Chapter 4 is entitled "The Pogrom of the Left: The Prelude to White Terror." This covers almost exclusively the terrible atrocities committed by the communists after their defeat in the Battle of Athens (Chapter 3).

Gerolymatos apparently is compelled to point out, even in the title, that even though this was terrorism by the left, more rightist terror was coming, pre-emptively absolving the left of much of its blame. Throughout the book, the author mentions the depredations of the left but always immediately points out that the right was up to no good, as well.

Gerolymatos continually puts the blame on the outside world (mostly the British and later the U.S.) for the problems in Greece. Again, Gerolymatos is faithful in chronicling the actions of the Greek leaders and citizens, but in



his analysis, he always reminds the reader that it was those pesky outsiders who meddled and set the Greeks up for failure.

Gerolymatos spends too much time on the prewar and World War II periods (chapters 1 and 2), way too much on the Battle of Athens (Chapter 3), and very little on the major part of the war (Chapter 5) that would have illuminated his subtitle and provided lessons for today. He never does effectively make his case that the U.S. experience in Greece led directly to Vietnam.

The book provides some utility: It gives a good historical background of the Greek Civil War and some good insights into the plight of the common Greek during that period. Unfortunately, it is of little use for the policy-maker or the national-security-studies student. Gerolymatos never covers in any detail the massive effort executed by the U.S. and the Greek government in defeating the insurgency. He makes it appear that the U.S. gave lots of money and equipment (true), and a few military advisers (way off the mark). There was literally an American counterpart advising and assisting every member of the Greek government bureaucracy.

A great deal of the U.S. effort was ground-breaking, and while some lessons were applied in Vietnam, many were not. The single biggest accomplishment, contributing immeasurably to the victory, was the U.S. success in turning the war from one of "Greek royalists vs. Greek communists," into one of "Greeks vs. communists." In today's terminology, the U.S. won the information-operations war. Gerolymatos never mentions that at all, which is a shame.

Readers who have no background knowledge of the Greek Civil War should read Gerolymatos' book with some trepidation. They should look at the bibliography and find some additional read-

ing to fill in the gaps. Readers who have a good background should read it. You will not agree with all of the author's analysis, regardless of your views, but one always learns from that. The Greek Civil War was an important time for the Greek nation and for the budding U.S. superpower. The lessons of that war need to be applied in Iraq, as we attempt to rebuild a country and fight an insurgency at the same time. We would do well to try to learn from history. *Red Acropolis, Black Terror* will not fill that need alone, but it is a start.

COL Steven Bucci
Office of the Secretary of Defense
Washington, D.C.

Insurgent Collective Action and Civil War in El Salvador. By Elisabeth Jean Wood. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003. ISBN: 0-521-01050-0. 308 pages. \$23.

In *Insurgent Collective Action and Civil War in El Salvador*, Elisabeth Jean Wood presents a highly detailed academic study of the factors that led to insurgent collective action in El Salvador.

A thorough knowledge of the motives and tactics behind insurgent collective action is critical on today's battlefields, and Wood's book provides insight at the lowest levels of action. She explores the motivations behind joining an insurgency when the cost of such membership may be death. Unlike other researchers who focus on material grievances, Wood concludes that emotional and moral motives were instrumental in the emergence and consolidation of insurgent collective action. Her book also provides limited insight into the motives that prevented collective action.

Wood spent three months in El Salvador in 1987, followed by trips there until the end of the war. She



divided her time primarily between case-study regions in two contested areas. She conducted her case studies in the municipality of Tenancingo (similar to a U.S. county) and in the department of Usulután (similar to a U.S. state). The closely defined areas allowed Wood to perform an in-depth analysis of each area's activities and residents, but her study is limited in its representation of the nationwide population.

Wood's research was based on interviews with more than 200 Salvadorans, including campesinos, members of the local elite, religious leaders and rebel leaders. Notably absent from the list of interviewees are representatives from the Salvadoran government or military. The greatest benefit of Wood's research seems to be that it provides a view of the insurgency from the bottom up, allowing the reader to view the insurgency through the campesino's eyes.

Wood finds that while traditional Marxist motivations existed, the critical motives inducing collective action in El Salvador were emotional and moral. Liberation theology, practiced by Roman Catholic priests and nuns, provid-

ed the catalyst for the initial political organization and mobilization by giving campesinos the hope of a better life that ignited the insurgent movement.

Wood identifies three main emotional and moral motives for the support and growth of the insurgent movement: participation, defiance and pleasure in agency. Participation is the involvement in activities that reflect moral commitment, the cause that is worthy of support no matter the outcome. Wood writes, "Nearly all the campesinos interviewed resented the poverty and humiliation they endured before the war." Some came to believe that social justice was the "will of God," and thus participation in the struggle was morally just.

Defiance was the result of moral outrage at the government's response to perceived just actions and the campesino/insurgent's refusal to submit. "Repression by government forces appears to have been the best recruiter for insurgent forces throughout Usulután," Wood says. Defiance is forced; it is a reaction to injustice, rather than a decision. Pleasure in agency is a public assertion of self-worth, displaying pride in the effectiveness of change. Prior to the war, campesinos felt like animals tied to the land. After the war, campesinos could claim land in pursuit of their own material interests and had hope of a decent future for their families. They had established dignity and self-worth.

Many of the same patterns, reactions and motivations that Wood identifies can also be seen in current U.S. military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, and a better understanding of insurgent motivations is critical. In El Salvador, religion was instrumental to the spread of the insurgency, and the killing of religious leaders only increased the recruitment of insurgents. One might ask if the same

reaction could occur in Iraq if the radical leaders inciting rebellion were to be targeted.

Wood's research provides a view of the way insurgency works. For example, the primary contribution of the indirect supporters was the provision of intelligence on government movements to the insurgents, and the denial of intelligence on insurgent movements to the government. Therefore, the population is absolutely critical (thus the center of gravity) to both insurgency and counterinsurgency, indicating that popular perception must be a consideration and the focus in all operations.

To her detriment, Wood spends a lot of ink justifying her findings with statistics and explaining the psychological analysis behind her conclusions. Her work does provide important points on the motivations that lead to collective action, but focused reading is required to seize the key points. This book is not intended for junior officers who need a concise introduction to insurgency theory or to the war in El Salvador. But for a student of insurgency, the book provides a glimpse of what makes an insurgent organization operate and grow. The book also provides a non-typical view of the reasons behind mobilization, which helps to expand the tools for the counterinsurgency planning so critical in modern-day conflicts.

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Special Warfare

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